YOGA

Uniting East and West

Selvarajan Yesudian and Elisabeth Haich

Representatives of two different worlds and two entirely different attitudes, the two authors explore the wide domain of Eastern and Western philosophy. They believe that the only possible means of achieving harmonious co-operation between these two worlds lies in Yoga—the conscious development of mind, soul and body.

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Yoga

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SELVARAJAN YESUDIAN

AND

ELISABETH HAICH

FOREWORD
BY PROFESSOR T. HUZELLA

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Foreword

SELVARAJAN YESUDIAN was my master in Indian wisdom and my pupil in his biological and medical studies.

In his harmoniously balanced personality he combines European and Asiatic culture. At home he was initiated into the ancient traditions of his country and his estate that reach their peak in the ages-old teachings of Yoga. The latter have enabled him to achieve extraordinary physical and mental powers which are based on inherited traits characteristic of the Indians and which far surpass the accomplishments we in the Occident are accustomed to. His Christian faith in which he was brought up at home awakened in him a longing to experience the holy community of people of all countries and continents, a community based on world brotherhood and love of one's fellow man.

During his many years of residence in Europe he has learned occidental ways. He has made a profound study of western religion, science, customs and traditions, as compared to oriental civilization and oriental Christianity. For many years he has been living and working in Europe as a true friend of our joys and sorrows. His noble appearance, his physical strength and agility that reflect corresponding mental qualities, his firm and resolute character combined with great tact, his thoroughness in thinking things all the way through, his gentleness and courtesy, his justified pride in the self discipline he has attained—all combined with extreme modesty and friendliness—have helped him make many fast friends. Once accustomed to his outward appearance which marks him as a man from a far country, these new friends learned that, back of his frank, penetrating glance there is an understanding, long-distance way of viewing life in both East and West. Human ignorance has darkened the sky of the Occident, and into this sky Selvarajan Yesudian radiates the eastern morning light—the 'lux ex oriente'—and the revitalizing warmth of the brotherly love that unites people of all lands and races.

With conscious purposefulness, Selvarajan Yesudian is fulfilling his mission, his calling, his destiny in life—his 'karma'—by building a spiritual bridge between East and West and removing the obstacles in the way of a meeting and understanding between these two parts of the world. In an effort to be a guide for our intellect so avidly athirst for faith, he endeavours to bring together the two human paths—the individual path of the Orient and the collective path of the Occident. He would like to show us human beings the *one and only* path that leads from the single SELF of the individual to the *one and only* GOD, to the TRUTH that is *one and the same* regardless of the names it has been given at various times by different nations. In this book Selvarajan Yesudian offers to share with his occidental brethren the heavenly joys he has experienced while travelling himself on the path towards God.

Through fructifying the occidental mind with the Indian's contemplative, introspective manner of thinking to the very core of things, through balanced development of body and mind in ways adapted to our physical and mental constitution, through arousing the suppressed, dormant faculties of the occidental—he offers a way to halt the insane, pell-mell race for senseless records. He shows us how to fill our overorganized, mechanized, materialistic western world with new life-giving oriental spirit, how to liberate the occidental from the slavery of his blind, wild instincts, and how—through awakening our desire for mental and spiritual treasures—to put a stop to exaggerated cravings for worldly power and possessions. Striving against the irreligion and unbelief arising from man's ignorance and half knowledge about himself, Mr. Yesudian is out to help man bring about the victory of mind over matter.

With the competence of the native and initiated Indian, he is ready to train us in self recognition, in the knowledge of man's three-fold existence—physical, mental and spiritual—that fits so perfectly into the great scheme of things throughout the universe.

To all of us who have been so deeply disappointed in our materialistic view of life, to all of us who are apparently so inextricably involved in personal, political and social crises, Selvarajan Yesudian brings hope for a mental, spiritual, and moral renaissance, and faith in God and in ourselves.

On the other hand, the people of the Orient who turn away from the outward things of this world would be helped towards better living conditions for their people if they would travel the occidental path of developing community spirit, organizational talent and practical sense.

This reciprocal fructification process between East and West—the union of individual and collective efforts—can never be attained through compulsion, but only through love in the holy community of Christianity. Only such a community—by bringing about human brotherhood throughout all nations, all parts of the world, all denominations—can conquer the hatred that storms through groups of people, states, classes, parties, and religious organizations—plunging mankind into war and misery. Only such a community in Christianity can settle, on a superior mental and spiritual plane, the antagonisms between individualism and collectivism, patriotism and love of humanity, idealism and realism.

The profound ideas and high ideals discussed in this book—in simple, easily understood, non-technical language—contain the germ of the spiritual renaissance that can save mankind . . . through spreading horizontally until it reaches all humanity, and vertically from the darkest depths of the consciousness, through the personal effort and will of those who have faith, up to God, the Omniscient and Almighty.

Alsogöd, Hungary, June 1947

PROFESSOR TH. HUZELLA,
Dr. med. Hungarian Medical University
Member of the Carnegie Institute

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Introduction

MANY books have already been written on Indian religious philosophy. Their exhaustive study of Indian teachings as contained in the Vedas, Upanishads, Yoga Pradipika, and in the teachings of Patanjali, Sankaracharya, etc., make it unnecessary to discuss the theoretical side of Yoga and Yoga philosophy. It seems to us much more appropriate to give a practical introduction to Yoga as it actually is. In the Occident, a large section of opinion still gives credence to the erroneous notion that Yoga is a kind of religious revelation applicable only to Eastern peoples; too often it is assumed that Yoga conflicts with Christian teachings and is of no use to those living in the West. It is our aim to correct this error, because for many seekers after God such a misunderstanding blocks the shortest path toward the Kingdom of Heaven.

Yoga is not a religion, but a possibility based on psychological fact, for developing the human SELF and unifying the SELF with God. If it is true, however, that Yoga leads to God, then it is likewise true that it cannot be hostile towards any religion; for there is only one God and only one SELF, no matter what names we are accustomed to using. It is our aim to point out that Christ also taught the way of Yoga, for the path of the human soul toward God is—Yoga. Accordingly, the hard, steep and narrow path taught by Christ is also Yoga. Names and forms are only the outer garment which clothe the same fact, the same truth.

This book has been written for people of the West. For this reason, we have preferred to illustrate and demonstrate truth by utilizing examples and statements from the Bible rather than from the Holy books of the Orient; for we have undertaken, not to present an Oriental exoticism, but truth itself. And for each of us, truth is easier to grasp when couched in the terms and expressions to which we have become accustomed from early childhood.

In these pages we should like to point out the one and only way for both East and West. Each of us is striving to reach the gateway to the Highest Life, for the goal of one and all is God! The Kingdom of Heaven is actually the same living truth for Christians, Hindus and every one else. All are striving to reach this goal, even though the ways and means they use may be different. The 'Promised Land' is in our hearts and blessed is he that finds it.

We are but tiny atoms in universal space, but we feel the urge to share with our brothers the heavenly joys which we have discovered along the pathway leading to God. The path is hard because it is so supremely simple. But it is worth all our effort and struggle; for once we have reached the goal, we will be able to say:

'I have fought the fight but with help,—
and I have fought the fight to find this help,—
and lo the help is in me,—
the life-giving God-Self dwelling deep
within my heart.'

The last chapter of the book clearly shows where and how the paths of the Occident and the Orient meet and how each can help the other to reach the goal sooner. May these pages help overcome all barriers blocking the way toward complete understanding of the two Worlds. May they help people to understand one another and to meet in the blessed realization that we are all one great family, that

WE ARE ALL CHILDREN OF ONE FATHER.

Selvarajan Yesudian
Elisabeth Haich

I

What is Yoga?

'With the sword of the understanding of thyself thou shalt rend asunder in thy heart every doubt arising from ignorance, and thou shalt achieve thy permanence in Yoga. . . .'
Bhagavad Gita

EACH of us, sooner, or later, comes to a momentous point in life when he suddenly realizes that he is living, alive in space and time, standing between past and future. But his memory can cast only a tiny ray of light on an extremely small part of the past. Beyond this point everything is lost in mist as dim and uncertain as the future whose secrets are inscrutable. He begins to sense the great questions: WHENCE?—WHITHER?—WHY?

At some time or other he was born and sometime he will die. This he knows, but not from his own experience. Had he grown up alone on an uninhabited island, never seeing that people are born and die, he would have no idea that man is born, for he should have no memory of such a thing. Likewise he would be ignorant of the fact that, in accordance with the laws of nature, he will someday die. However, as he is living among people, he knows from the example of others that everyone on earth was once born and, since he is here now, will sometime have to die.

But where was he before birth? Where does he go after death? And why must he travel on this path between these two stations?

Whoever has pondered over such questions has opened his eyes to behold the infinite wisdom acting through all manifestations of life. He sees the geometrical, mathematical, physical, and chemical laws within every created form. He finds it impossible that a long lifetime full of experiences, beauty, joy and sorrow, happiness and hardship—oft-times with great achievements—can emerge from a void and fade away into nothing. He cannot accept a doctrine which holds that life is blind, arbitrary, pointless and without reason or guiding principle. But if there is an inner principle and if there is a point to it all, what is this principle, what is the point? What power brings man onto this earth and calls him away again when his time has come? And what is the meaning back of it all?

All of these questions are answered for us when we can realize *who* is coming from somewhere, going somewhere, and living for some purpose.

The answer to this question *who*? seems to be very simple: 'I'—Yes, but do we know who this 'I' really is?

* * *

If I concentrate on myself and begin to explore, I discover some very remarkable things. First of all I notice that there is not just one self within me but several. Here is an example. While I am reading a book, something flashes into my mind that happened during the day. I relive the experience, continue the line of thinking, and wonder what I should do in the matter. Suddenly I notice that I have read on to the end of the page which I should now turn in order to read further. Thus, while I have been thinking over past events, 'someone' has been reading, letter by letter, and, word by word, on to the end of the page. But who? For I cannot recall a single word that this other person in me has read while my thoughts were wandering.

A second example probably comes within everyone's experience. I am saying my prayers. While I repeat the words, tomorrow's duties come to mind and I begin to plan what I should do and how to go about it. Suddenly I realize I have come to the 'Amen'. Who in me has said this prayer while I was thinking about other things? An even more interesting case occurs when I am obliged to add a column of figures and my thoughts stray elsewhere. But someone in me is adding the figures and writing down the total. Astonished, I look at the figures and add them up again, this time with more care, assuming that the sum written down is probably wrong because my thoughts were drifting. Now, however, to my great surprise, I find these figures are completely correct. The 'person' who was adding them up within me can add correctly, has written the total without a mistake, and done so with my own hand. The astonishing fact is that whereas I have said the prayer countless times since childhood, to the point that it has become completely routine, I was faced with this column of figures in this order for the first time just now and, therefore, was certainly not adding them up as a purely habitual operation. This 'person' within me who was adding these figures had to add each individual digit with understanding in order to reach the sum recorded. But who is this 'someone'? Obviously myself, but *unconsciously*. And who, at the same time, was thinking about other things? Likewise myself, but *consciously*. Thus there can be no doubt that within me there is more than one self. On the other hand, I have only one consciousness and am able to direct this consciousness towards one or the other of my selves according to my interest and will.

Furthermore, I can observe that there is still 'someone' else living within me who does not occupy the same plane with the self that thinks, adds, subtracts and reads. This third 'inner person' stands above the others, observing me, criticizing me, teaching, judging and advising me and demanding an accounting for all my actions and all my thoughts. When I am ruffled or upset, this inner person remains calm and unperturbed, knowing no excitement. But when I am in distress he helps me.

How often have we heard—perhaps even experienced ourselves—that in a moment of great danger, someone escaped only through doing what he was later unable to explain, having done it as if 'another person' had been acting within him. In the moment of danger, 'someone' stepped into his place, someone who must be omniscient, for by acting through him, this 'someone' saved him from something which actually did not happen until later. Therefore, this 'someone' must know the future.

Once, during a delicate operation, a famous surgeon was concentrating on his patient and his exacting work. Suddenly he leaned forward, his body completely covering the open incision in his patient's abdomen. A split second later the glass shade of the operating lamp exploded. A shower of splintered glass fell harmlessly onto the surgeon's back instead of into the open wound in the patient's body. In vain, the surgeon's assistants asked him why he had suddenly bent over his patient. He was unable to give any explanation. 'Someone' had acted in him and through him. At the critical moment he experienced this 'someone' as his own self, feeling that this 'someone' knew exactly what he was doing and why. Afterwards, however, he no longer felt himself identical with this 'someone'. He was no longer able to remember what had caused him to make this movement and save his patient. Who was acting within him and manifesting this knowledge of the future?

One day in our house in Madras, my mother, upon entering the bathroom, suddenly saw a cobra. She started to back away but slipped and fell flat on the floor. 'Don't budge', her inner voice commanded. As if frozen, she lay still while the snake coiled up on her breast to enjoy the warmth of the body. A long time later—probably after hearing a sound from outside—the cobra slid down and disappeared in the garden. Had my mother made the slightest move, she would most certainly have been bitten. Afterwards, she found it impossible to explain how she had been able to lie there without a quiver. Not until she was in safety did she become paralyzed with fright. Who was it in her that was so cool and relaxed in the moment of danger? Who knew that this was the only way of escaping death?

Without doubt this 'someone' who comes to our aid in moments of danger is again our own self. But it is a part of our inner being that stands *above* the rest in knowledge, power, strength and morals, in fact, in everything. It has power over us. When it is displeased, it tortures us, for a guilty conscience is the greatest of agonies. On the other hand, when we can satisfy this 'higher person' within us, we experience an intense feeling of happiness unequalled by anything else on earth. In moments of great nervous strain this SELF takes possession of our consciousness. We feel that it *is* our self, yet so high above us that we recognize it only as the voice of conscience. As if it were another person, we feel we cannot raise our own consciousness high enough to feel ourselves identical with it. This SELF, however, can take possession of our consciousness at will. Who is this higher SELF? Who are the other 'everyday' selves that think, calculate, ponder and err within us? And how can it be possible that my self and my consciousness are not one and the same?

Consciousness is a condition of the SELF. If we wish to get better acquainted with it, we must first understand:

WHAT IS THE 'SELF'?

God is everywhere. God fills universal space. The universe lives because God fills it with his Being. God is Being. God is Life, and Life is God. In the Gospel according to St. John we find: 'And the Word (LOGOS) was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.' (John 1; 1-3).

From the tiniest one-celled creature all the way up to the most highly developed forms, everything is filled with life. Wherever we look we see thousands of manifestations of life in various stages of development. On the highest earthly rung of this ladder stands man.

How does man feel the presence of life in himself? He experiences his existence as his SELF and expresses this feeling in the first person saying 'I am'.

If therefore life is God and if life in the consciousness of man appears as a feeling of his SELF, of his 'I am', then this 'I' is God within us. This is also proven by the Bible; for when Moses asked what God's name was, God replied 'EHEJE', signifying 'I am that I AM' (Exodus 3; 14). This means the SELF which is eternally present, for the statement is neither 'I was', nor 'I shall be' but 'I AM', that is, the uninterrupted, eternal BEING, GOD!

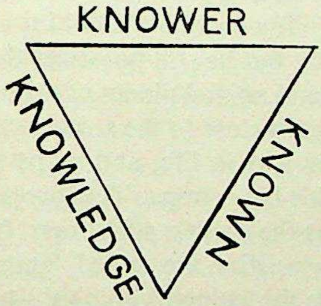
Does man know that his SELF is life, that is, God within him? No. Mankind is not aware of this. The consciousness of the average man moves on a much lower level; by and large, man is far too limited to lift his consciousness up to union with God. The fact that this possibility exists, however, was proven by the greatest masters, the divine teachers who lived in our midst in a material human body while their consciousness was identical with God. 'I and my Father are one', said Christ (John 10; 30). In his own life, Christ proved that union with God is possible even during life in the human body, that the body is no impediment, and that divine consciousness is an attainable goal for every one. As if impelled by an unquenchable thirst, mankind forever feels the urge to climb upwards towards the highest goal. This endless striving after the ultimate aim is one of the characteristics which differentiate man from animals. Animals do not want to be more than they are. A dog is satisfied to remain a dog and a horse has no wish to be anything more than a horse. No animal tries to distinguish himself from his fellows through special achievements. Only man feels an inner urge to be more than he is; unconsciously he feels the hidden possibilities within himself. This inmost driving force is the spur of the divine SELF within us that is always leading us onward, urging us not to be satisfied with the results we have achieved, but to stride on forward and upward until we have reached the supreme goal. Mountain climbers follow this instinct when they undergo all kinds of physical hardships, pushing onward and upward, overcoming their difficulties, until they reach the uppermost peak. Along the way they meet much that is delightful. Sunny clearings and green meadows invite them to rest. Crystal streams quench their thirst. But the mountaineers do not remain among these beauties. Pausing only for short spells, they press on, higher and higher, scaling the naked rocks, for their souls find no peace until they have reached their goal, the topmost point, the majestic summit.

Generally we do not realize that this urge is back of our everyday haste, our constant efforts to excel each other, and the passion for record-breaking achievements, so common among our various sports. Each of us would like to reach the pinnacle of success in all we undertake. Each would like to become omniscient, omnipotent, perfect. But there is only one perfection —God. If man therefore really wishes to become all-knowing and all-powerful, this means he must become God. Is it possible for each individual to become a God? No, but man's consciousness can lift itself above his human existence and rise up into union with God. This possibility was likewise proven by Christ when he said: 'Is it not written in your law, "I said, Ye are gods?"' (John 10; 34; Psalms 82; 6).

But why cannot the average man unite his consciousness with God at will? To answer this question, we must first understand:

WHAT IS CONSCIOUSNESS?

Consciousness is a condition of the self. If I look at myself face to face, become conscious of my self, and perceive this, there arises a condition or state. This state has various levels depending on how much I understand my self. The less I recognize of myself, the more limited, and the narrower is my consciousness. In proportion as I progress in self-understanding, my consciousness expands. The highest level will be reached when I shall have recongnized my SELF in its entirety. This state is perfect: for it is three in one and one in three: RECOGNITION, the RECOGNIZED and the RECOGNIZER,—they are one and the same: I myself.



The average person is not able to experience this condition, because he does not know his SELF.

* * *

Everything that has been created, was created by the Word—LOGOS—which was God before the beginning of creation. Hence, throughout the Universe, every form of life is a manifestation of God. The extent of the manifestation, however, depends on the level of the intelligence manifesting itself. We can easily see the difference between the consciousness of the plant world and that of the animal world—and again between the consciousness of the latter and that of the highest earthly level, man. The difference is so great that in the case of plants for example, we can scarcely say that they have consciousness. Nevertheless, the facts prove that the behaviour of plants is such as to show the evidence of an initial, low level of consciousness.

In expressions of life we can observe various degrees of consciousness. The seemingly lifeless material plane is the lowest. But we know that crystals possess wonderful properties. They develop and grow according to strict geometrical rules. Then too, they have positive and negative radiations, which is a further proof that matter is not lifeless. The next plane is the plant kingdom where we find organic manifestations of life. Then come the animals with instincts, urges and feelings. Finally there is man to whom the slow, sure processes of development have given the ability to grow out of the animal condition and put his foot on the stairway leading to new possibilities—into the world of the mind. His ability to think lifts him above the levels of plant and animal life, but he still possesses the properties of the material, vegetable and animal planes of existence. The primitive human is still much too close to the animals to be able to use his mind for the higher joys in life, and so he uses it as a means towards gratifying his baser urges. The forces of nature manifest themselves in him as the crudest selfishness. It is not by accident that certain characteristics are called 'animal', as our lower instincts actually are the 'animal within us'—to use the expression employed by the great master Paracelsus.

In his essence, man is a magnificently constructed instrument for manifesting the mental level in the material world. His highly developed brain makes it possible for man, with the aid of his mind, to be a mediator for the divine SELF and to engage in an unselfish activity on the earthly plane. Man is the mediator and the connecting link between the spiritual and the material world. While his body belongs to the material world, it is his mission to keep his consciousness in the highest spiritual realms and, by means of the mind, to manifest in thoughts, words and deeds the inspiration he receives on the spiritual plane.—'. . . he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven,' said Christ

Jesus (Matthew 7; 21). But how can man know what his Father's will is?—Through raising his consciousness to HIM! The body is only the executing tool for carrying out the divine will.

The tragedy of life begins when he loses sight of the higher purpose of his existence and identifies himself in his consciousness with his body and its instincts. The body belongs to the material world. It must be nourished in order to keep well, and its mortality demands that off-spring be produced as replacement for spent and worn out physical equipment. Consequently there are two mighty forces of nature at work within the body to fulfil these tasks: the urge for self preservation and the urge to perpetuate the species. But the human consciousness is supposed to stand over these forces and guide them with its will. Most of us, however, have forgotten that our SELF is spiritual,—immortal,—and a part of God. Through identifying himself with the physical, instead of mastering the gigantic natural forces at work in his body, man has allowed these forces to gain control over him. Thus bound to the material world, man condemns himself to the most oppressing bondage. The desires of the flesh weigh him down with heavy chains. Man's animal appetites have overpowered him. They suppress his higher abilities and his spiritual vision. This is man's fall from paradise into sin in which the greater part of humanity is still living and struggling today. The fact that man is alive he foolishly considers to be his own personal achievement. Thus, with this erroneous belief, he overshadows the radiating brilliance of his OVERSELF. Love, and the need for nourishment, he debases by treating them as ends in themselves. He becomes the slave of his desires for possession, for play, for alcohol, tobacco and other narcotics, for comfort and hundreds of other momentary gratifications of his perverted instincts. The inclinations of the average individual are manifestations of his corporality. His love is selfish. He is always seeking something. If he gives anything, he expects something in return. He wants to exploit his ability and talent for his own advantage, forgetting all about the community and the fact that he was given his abilities and talents in order to serve his fellow men. If he is successful, he considers this to be his own personal achievement. He allows himself to become ambitious and vain. He becomes proud of his person and imagines that the powers and abilities he has received in order to fulfil his earthly mission are his own characteristics. If he would only reflect a little about the fact that no one can become a great artist, like Michelangelo for example, merely through an act of his own personal will—for no one can give talent to himself or to others —he would realize that the abilities he commands have come from somewhere and that he has certainly not received them in order to boast about them and use them only for his own personal advantage. In his blindness he does not realize that every ability comes from God and that man is merely a channel through which divine qualities can manifest themselves as talent. Abilities can be earned so that in out next incarnation they accompany us into life as a gift of God. But we cannot give ourselves any abilities. At most we can develop ourselves through conscious practice, so that in our future life—according to the words of the Bible—God will give us more talents to invest profitably. Those of us, however, who follow our bodily appetites do not bother about developing ourselves; for study and practice are tiring and require a great deal of patience and perseverance. Such individuals are merely pursuing pleasures, with no thought of spiritual development. Obviously their thinking moves on a low level. They cannot be objective. They see and judge everything from the standpoint of their own little ego. Their mind is filled with personal desires; hence their field of vision is narrow, and their consciousness of self is shrunken and concerned only with their person. A consciousness on this plane we call 'personal consciousness'.

Consciousness follows our desires,—'. . . where your treasure is, there will your heart be also,' said Jesus (Matthew 6; 21). As long as our wishes bind us to things material, we cannot be free; we continue to be slaves of the earthly plane. The result is unhappiness and constant dissatisfaction, because man in his blindness cuts himself off from unity. He becomes isolated, and loses sight of the fact that he is a part of and identical with the great whole, the Absolute. As his connection to God is loosened, his powers are correspondingly diminished. He becomes weak and believes he can strengthen his personality by holding fast to his selfishness and ignorance. The farther he removes himself from God, the more he is tortured with loneliness and emptiness until finally this spiritual suffering causes him to seek help. But here too man makes a mistake. He erroneously believes that his liberation from bondage must be sought outside himself. He expects the help to come from others.

It is pitiable how many talented and promising people become slaves of tobacco, alcohol and numerous base appetites and are unable to break these habits by their own will power. When they wish to liberate themselves, they have recourse to all kinds of remedies outside themselves—even trying hypnotism—instead of drawing on their own never failing source of power in order to build up their life on a new and better plane. The average individual is unable to draw on the source of power dwelling in the depths of his consciousness, because he does not have any idea that in his superconscious mind he possesses magic powers. Since his thinking dwells on his own person, his vision is clouded. —'Having eyes, they see not,' said Jesus. Such persons are unable to raise their consciousness up to the higher levels of their being. Those mighty forces which dwell within every one of us are unattainable for the average individual because they lie outside his consciousness. He is like the owner of a little field in which a great chest of gold lies buried. As long as he does not know about it, he feels and lives like a beggar while all the time he is in possession of immense wealth. He would only need to dig under the surface to find the treasure. If people would only dig into their own SELF, if they would not so grossly neglect this great field of buried wealth, they would find the incomparably rich treasure of which Jesus said '. . . where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. . . .' (Matthew 6; 20).

Man is constantly directing his attention toward the outer world and he is therefore conscious of only a very small part of his being. Much larger and of greater importance is the other part—the 'world of the subconscious' which is almost completely unexplored territory for people in the Occident. Modern psychologists are searching for this 'terra incognita', but with their various theories they are still merely feeling their way into a completely unknown world. To be sure, they have found that all kinds of instincts and desires are at work deep down under the average human consciousness. Hence the expression 'the subconscious'. But they know little or nothing about the levels of consciousness lying *above* that of the average individual. Only a few investigators are studying this phase of the human mind.

The lower physical instincts are absolutely necessary, as they provide for the preservation of the body and the race. But they must, under all circumstances, be controlled; for if we give them free reign, we loose the devils of the underworld upon ourselves. The devil is in reality nothing other than the physical appetites obeying the laws of matter. These forces are like wild horses. When we are weak, we get thrown into the ditch. But when we tame them, they become faithful servants that will help us in every situation and run swiftly when need be. Riding on such steeds we can progress with the speed of an arrow toward our great goal. But the lower physical appetites must not merely be repressed and pushed below the level of consciousness, as this can cause all kinds of disorders. On the contrary, they must be brought up into the consciousness—into the light of day—where we can recognize them. Then we can *transform* them in any way we wish so that they not only are powerless to cause disease, but even can be utilized to enhance our spiritual development.

All our powers originate in our higher Self. And when we succeed in leading back to their original source the forces hitherto manifested as physical appetites, we can transform them—or in Freud's terminology, sublimate them and lead them into more useful channels. Then, instead of being plagued by repressed desires which tend to cause ill health, we are able to achieve a level of well being that borders on the miraculous. The great psychologists have now come to speak of the SELF that resides deep inside the individual. Persons who have been put into a hypnotic trance have been able to attain the level of this 'super-conscious Self' where time and space cease to exist. They were able to speak about people and things located on the other side of the world, just as if they were in the immediate vicinity:

They saw everything and knew everything, and while they were in this condition, their sicknesses were healed in a most inexplicable manner. But some people believe that this state is attainable only through hypnotism.

When we read books on psychology, we are forced to think of the Biblical statement that Moses was the last servant of God with whom God spoke face to face. To those who came after Moses God revealed his will only in dreams, i.e., while they were fast asleep,—just as it is possible to approach what modern psychologists call the 'collective subconscious' during sleep and in dreams. Psychologists are about to discover, deep within the individual, the source of life—the divine SELF.

In India people have been studying the secrets of the mind since time immemorial. For Indian masters, the world beyond the consciousness—with its lower and higher levels—is well explored territory. They also know how to attain the divine SELF while awake and *fully conscious.*

However low the consciousness of the average person may sink, in the unexplored realms of his subconscious being there reigns—supreme, unruffled and glowing with eternal radiance—LIFE itself, the OVERSELF. This OVERSELF constantly spurs us onward and upward, ceaselessly telling us not to be satisfied with the bondage of the material world, telling us to struggle to free ourselves from slavery as quickly as possible. This eternal mission of our SELF to spur us onward is manifested in our human longing for perfection and freedom.

From the most primitive bushman to the individual with the most highly developed intellect, each of us carries in his breast, consciously or unconsciously, the will to freedom. Instinctively we struggle to expand our power, to control the natural forces, animals and even people about us, to do as we please, to avoid being bound—in a word—*to be free.* The fatal error lies only in our believing that the satisfaction of all our selfish desires is freedom. The result is just the opposite: we become slaves of our appetites. From the primitive, prehistoric cave man whittling out a club to expand his power—all the way up to modern man using every achievement of science and engineering for his personal comfort—every human has sought or is seeking freedom. But since they have not and are not seeking freedom where freedom really is, they fall ever deeper into bondage. The everlasting chase after money and riches also shows that, consciously or unconsciously, people are being whipped and goaded onward by their desire for freedom; they imagine that possessions can bring them this freedom. As a result, they become slaves of this lust for money. They spend their whole lifetime trying to acquire wealth. They devote all their mental energies to figuring out ways and means of making a fortune. And when they finally succeed, they fall even deeper into the slavery of their own possessions. They try to grab more. And the fluctuations of the market keep them worried and uncertain.

Then there are those who believe that power means freedom. Freedom to them means domination over others. They spend the greater part of their lives trying to grab high positions. By skilful use of their elbows, they shove others aside and climb over them. By the time they reach their goal, they too have become slaves of their power. Burdened with the weight of their own bonds, their title, rank, and self-imposed obligations, they are unable to move. In this way they ruin their lives. We could cite many more examples of people writhing in chains they have forged themselves. Many of them have let their own mistaken notion of freedom drive them into bondage. For this striving and driving merely brings them new fetters. It was Rabindranath Tagore who so wonderfully said:

'Prisoner, tell me who was it that wrought this unbreakable chain?'

'It was I,' said the prisoner, 'who forged this chain very carefully. I thought my invincible power would hold the world captive leaving me in a freedom undisturbed. Thus night and day I worked at the chain with huge fire and cruel hard strokes. When at last the work was done and the links were complete and unbreakable, I found that it held me in its grip.'

But is there then no way at all for mankind to attain freedom? Certainly! Christ Jesus teaches us: 'He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal' (John 12; 25). *We must free ourselves from our own person.* Our own desires and appetites make us slaves. When we liberate ourselves from these desires, we attain complete freedom.

The only true freedom is complete ABSENCE OF DESIRE!—DESIRELESSNESS! THE PATH OUT OF SLAVERY INTO FREEDOM—IS YOGA!

* * *

'Lead me
out of unreality into reality,
out of darkness into light,
out of death into LIFE.'

Let us take this ancient Indian prayer as our guide to find the right path, and once we have found it, let us never leave it.

* * *

Absence of desire—Desirelessness—frees us from the dazzling deceptions of the material world.—Desirelessness enlarges our vision . . .—makes a basic change in our viewpoint. It enables us to see things objectively and judge everything according to its true value.—Desirelessness frees us from evil, as our baser appetites can no longer get the upper hand over us.—Desirelessness frees us from all burdens of earthly life, and our mind can freely rise to the throne of God.—Desirelessness frees us from suffering, for all suffering is caused by ungratified desires.—Desirelessness frees us from death; for as soon as our desires and appetites cease to draw us down into the material world, the eternal cycle of birth and death ceases for us, and we are able to enjoy the eternal freedom of the spirit released from limitations of time and space. It is possible to experience this state while still living in our earthly body; for even though our body belongs to the material world, our consciousness can rise up and become one with the universal, divine SELF.

'Cast off every desire, and what remains of yourself is God,'—said Eckhart, the great German mystic of the Middle Ages.

But how can we be without desires? It is easier said than done. How can I rid myself of desires when *I myself* want them?

Here lies the great error of the human race. The I, the SELF has no desire. Desires are always natural forces active in our physical being, and persons with a low degree of consciousness identify themselves with these natural forces. In this way we create various unreal selves, and through constantly gratifying our physical desires as a matter of habit we build up these unreal selves until they gain such power over us that finally we are no longer able to distinguish between the self-created false appearance and our own true divine being, our real and immortal SELF.

The sum total of these false selves make up our personal ego—our personality. We can observe how these false selves arise and are constantly changing. One disappears and in its place we find another. Today we are fascinated by something and tomorrow our enthusiasm will have vanished. The weather may be different, or the electric tension in the air is changed—and we just cannot imagine how, only the day before, we could have wanted something that has no appeal for us at all today. Our today's ego cannot even understand our ego of yesterday, let alone our ego of past years. Under the influence of momentary impressions, new personalities are constantly being born within us. But down in the innermost depths of our being there dwells the eternal immutable SELF, and those of us who hold fast to it are not deceived by these changing appearances. Nor can these appearances lead us astray. On the contrary, we learn to control them and make them serve us. Unremittingly we must be on our guard, lest these false selves get out of hand. This constant watch strengthens our will power day by day and helps us keep our mental balance. Any one who neglects to keep on guard and gives free rein to these unreal selves is moving on a downward path. Such a person is always changing—due to the aging of his body, the journeys he makes, changes in climate and diet, and hundreds of other factors. He is a tragedy for himself and everybody with whom he has any contact. Under the influence of a fleeting mood, he gets married, chooses a profession, makes promises, and starts out to do all kinds of things; whereas only a short time later he is impressed by other things. He runs after other women, drops his work, breaks his promises and ruins himself, his family and everything he touches. Such a person has no true feeling of responsibility, because he has fallen out of the centre where the OVERSELF reigns supreme and unchanging. He has no foundation on which he and others can build. He has no inner strength. His will power is stunted, his consciousness is shrunken.

A person who shows more than the average degree of these characteristics is considered to be mentally deranged. But where is the boundary line? . . . Any one who cannot leave drink and tobacco alone is also suffering from weakness of will. The great majority of people do not even attempt to practise self-control. Fortunately fate itself forces all of us into exercising a certain amount of self-discipline. The individual who has awakened and developed his consciousness sees that this is all merely a question of degree. He sees, too, at what point a person caught in the net of false appearances becomes a menace to others.

When we recognize and control these unreal selves, we understand that our desires arise from these appearances and not from our true Self. We can rid ourselves of them by doing just the opposite of what they seem to call for. It is true, these unreal selves then begin to revolt, attack us with undreamed of energy, and often cause us bitter pain. Any one who has ever practised ascetic exercises is well acquainted with this inner struggle. But if we are strong and determined and steadfastly hold to our true Self, we are freed from these unreal selves, and from that moment on we are master in our own house. Once we have conquered, we find we have powers we never dreamed of possessing. The various ascetic exercises are therefore very much worthwhile; by strengthening our will they help us win the battle. The first and most necessary step is to find the source of the desires operating within us. Let us now see which of these is the strongest.

Again and again we are caught in nature's trap and identify ourselves with the two strongest and highest forces in nature: the instinct of self-preservation and that of propagation of the species.

Little children like sugar. They find it tasty and never seem to get enough. Adults generally have no desire for large amounts of sugar. They find it distasteful. The aged, on the other hand, reacquire their childhood liking for sugar and sweet dishes. Is it conceivable that the inner Self wishes for this sugar the child or the aged man enjoys so much? And is it the adult's inner Self that refuses sugar as something distasteful? No. The inner Self has no eating habits for it is immaterial, spiritual. The individual has merely been trapped by nature. He has identified himself with the instinct for self-preservation which calls for sugar to strengthen the baby's bones and later to strengthen the heart of the aged. During the peak years of its life the human organism has less need for sugar and the normal adult thus has less desire for it. We always find those things tasty that our body requires—provided of course that we have not spoiled our healthy physical instincts by the various poisons of civilisation and all kinds of 'fashionable' bad habits. We can observe that persons with insufficient stomach acid prefer sour dishes and that anaemic individuals like liver. It is not their SELF which shows such preferences. It is nature within them.

Let us take another example. As a general rule women with a well formed bosom and full hips are pleasing to healthy men. Men believe that such a preference is their own taste. In reality, however, they are merely caught in nature's net. Nature within them guides their taste and makes them consider as 'beautiful' those women who are suited for future motherhood. For well formed hips and a well built pelvis are necessary for bearing healthy children, and a well developed breast is nature's assurance of their future food supply. Does the man who finds a well proportioned woman attractive realize that she is attractive because she will be a suitable mother of his future child? No. Quite unconsciously he is obeying the natural instinct, operating within him, for the propagation of the species.

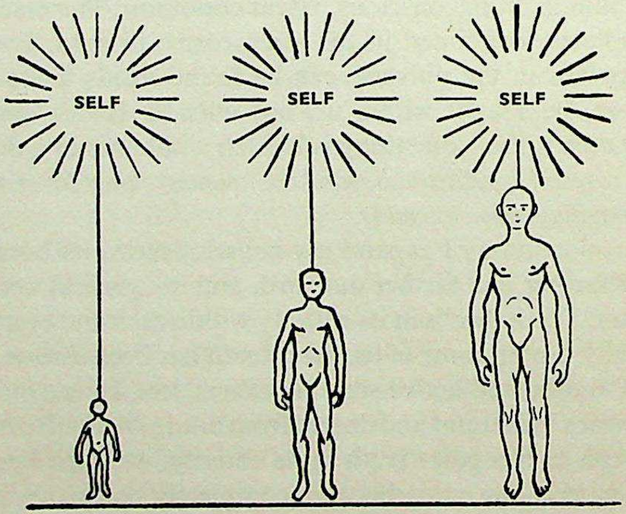
We must realize that nature is constantly making demands on us. But we must not identify ourselves with these demands. If we do, our freedom is instantly gone. The human being with a highly developed consciousness is no slave of these forces. He recognizes them and freely decides whether he will follow them or not. These forces are world-moving in their greatness. In so far as we learn to control and guide them, we can form them into magic powers that, likewise, will enable us to move worlds.

Through constantly examining and analyzing ourselves, we will be happily surprised to find that the secrets of our SELF become manifest to us. What is more, parallel with the expansion of our consciousness and our recognition of our true SELF, we find that our vision broadens and our knowledge expands in all direction from one level to the next. We reach the truth taught by Socrates: 'Man, know thyself, then thou shalt know everything'. When I recognize a fact which I did not know before, I experience an illumination in the brilliance of which I see what was previously concealed in darkness. Nevertheless it was already within me and must have been in me always. I did not take in anything from the outer world, as this is impossible. On the contrary, I found this particle of truth in the depths of my own SELF. Every external perception—whether through seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting or feeling—merely takes a veil off something that is already within me. Otherwise I could not *dis-cover* it. I merely did not know it was there within me.

When Edison made his epoch-making inventions, the particles of truth he came to see became clear within himself—within his consciousness—not somewhere out in the room where he was working. Hence, the truth he *dis-covered* must have already been within him in an unconscious, latent condition. The macrocosm is completely contained in the microcosm: in man. Every law that prevails in the universe can be found inside us and must, therefore, be sought within us, not outside. Hence, ignorance merely means that something is hidden within me in a dormant, *un-dis-covered* condition, *beyond the boundary thus far reached by my expanding consciousness.*

In proportion as I expand my consciousness, its borders are pushed farther and farther outward, and my general knowledge increases. Truth dwells in its entirety within each and every one of us equally. But in some of us, more truth has been *discovered* and is in an illuminated-active-state; in others, less. Hence our knowledge varies in amount and degree from one individual to another. If we wish to recognize truth in its entirety, we must know ourselves entirely, we must become completely conscious. Despite all his amazing knowledge of everything imaginable, mankind has almost wholly neglected the exploration of his own being. As a general rule people are quite unable to analyze themselves. Dr. Alexis Carrel, the world-famous winner of the Nobel Prize in medicine, calls attention to this matter. In his book 'Man the Unknown' Carrel points out that man's great neglect of self understanding is a cause of general unhappiness. 'The science of life has developed slower than our knowledge about lifeless matter,' he writes. 'We do not know ourselves!' Dr. Carrel cites statistics proving that the number of mental diseases is steadily increasing throughout the world. As long as mankind does not know what the SELF is, it will not be possible to heal the various mental disorders which are not caused by any organic changes and which are merely grouped under the name 'schizophrenia'. This word comes from the Greek roots 'schizo' meaning 'I split' and 'phren', 'mind, heart'. Hence this term merely means a splitting of the self, a disintegration of the personality. Indeed, in these mental derangements, there is something wrong with the ego. If our scientists knew the secret of the SELF, they would also know how to prevent and how to cure this disease.

'I am the way, the truth, and the life', said Christ Jesus; 'no man cometh unto the Father but by me.' (John 14; 6)—Indeed,

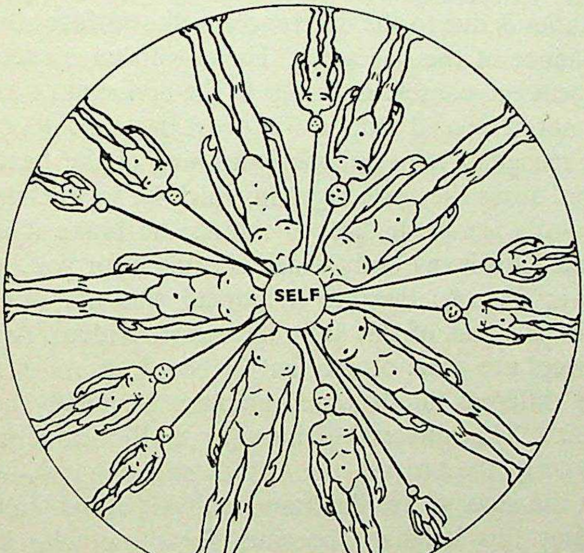


the Self is the way to the Father, for the Self is the life within us. The Self is like a rope hanging down from heaven.

The upper end is in God, the lower end in man. Our consciousness has to climb up this rope. The upper end is the completely developed, perfect, divine consciousness; the lower end, unconsciousness.

THE WAY OUT OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS INTO DIVINE CONSCIOUSNESS IS YOGA!

When we have succeeded in climbing up this rope, we make the surprising discovery that all the various individual ropes for all mankind lead up to the same central point. Those individuals who have climbed up into the complete development of their consciousness have become *one single, universal consciousness*.



'I am the vine, ye are the branches . . .' (John 15; 5).

Man's true essence is not his person. Man's person is merely a reflection of his true SELF. But since our person is imperfect, the reflection is dim and distorted. Hence our true perfection and the brilliant purity of our divine origin can scarcely be recognized. A dim, dark window can keep out all the glory of brilliant sunshine. But if I clean the window of my person, the radiance that comes in will guide me back to the true life-giving sun. And just as there are countless rays shooting out from *one* sun, so too are there uncounted individuals who all have their origin *in a single divine* SELF.

When we walk down a long corridor with many windows, we see the sun shining through each window and revealing various colours on the stone floor. Does each window have a special sun of its own that shines in and causes the different spots on the floor? No. We know that there is only one sun shining through all these windows and that the colours in the floor are caused by differences in the stones. Just so, a single divine SELF shines through every consciousness. Our mind is lighted by the brilliance of a single SELF, and the fact that there are so many kinds of personalities is due to the differences in the surfaces that reflect the brilliance of the one SELF. Those who have succeeded in raising personal consciousness up to the divine SELF know that this is not a legend but a PSYCHOLOGICAL FACT. Such persons recognize the symbolical meaning of the Last Supper. 'The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it and said: 'Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you.' (I Corinthians 11; 23, 24). Because the bread was the body of the SELF, there is part of this SELF in each individual. And just as these pieces are parts of *one* loaf of bread, so *too* are the apparently different minds which animate us merely parts of a single SELF. This universal divine SELF, in Biblical terminology, is the WORD, the LOGOS, the ALPHA and OMEGA,—CHRIST!

'I am the vine, ye are the branches,' said Jesus (John 15; 5). How clear this language becomes for those who know the secret of the SELF. The universal SELF is the stem, the vine; the persons are the branches. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (Mark 12; 31). Yes, of course! For you, and he, and all of us are branches of the same vine, part of the same divine SELF. If you wrong someone, you have wronged yourself. Your guilty conscience is the voice of the inner SELF which you have offended through the wrong done to your neighbour.

'For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ' (I Corinthians 12; 12).

Every word of the Gospels is clear to those who know from their own experience that the scriptures tell of the true and living Christ who was, is, and will be with us until the end of the world. For Christ is the SELF, LIFE, and TRUTH— and whosoever believes in him, even though he die, shall live.

Anyone who understands the Bible knows that the promises of the God-man are based on psychological facts. He knows that the Christ who said 'I am the Life' (John 14; 6) is not some distant idealized picture of the imagination, but a fact, the everlasting living truth, just as life itself is fact and truth. 'I am with you always—even unto the end of the world,' (Matthew 28; 20) HE promised. And HE *is* with us, for as long as there is life on earth, Christ is with us—since he is LIFE—the true SELF. If life were to leave us, that would be the end of the world. For without life there can be no world. LIFE—of which the form of manifestation is the SELF within our consciousness—can never cease to exist. LIFE can never die. Only the persons change, the outward forms, just as we change our clothes. Whoever identifies himself with the SELF instead of the person cannot die with the person but continues to live in the immortal, eternal, divine SELF. If we live in light, if we are light itself, how can shadow and darkness gain power over us?

We can only find life within ourselves, through our own life, not through the life of another. The Apostle Paul teaches us in his Epistle to the Romans (8; 10): 'If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.' And in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians (13; 5): '. . . Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you?' Paul knew that LIFE, the SELF, and CHRIST are one and the same.

However strange it may seem, it is nevertheless true that the Indian Yogis know this, for in union with the divine SELF they experience Christ. They merely call this condition by a different name—the Sanskrit word 'Samadhi'.

In the holy scriptures of India, the incarnated Word is called

Krishna—and Krishna says 'I am the LIFE in everything that lives.' And in the Bible, the Word which became flesh, Christ, says 'I am the LIFE.' The only difference is in a few letters in the name.

Those Yogis who know the Bible—and there are many of them—know that Christ is to the Christians what Krishna means to the Indians, i.e., the divine SELF. And they also know that this SELF is the same living fact in every human soul and in every age. Paul the Apostle expresses it thus: 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3; 28).

St. Francis of Assisi and the other Christian saints achieved union with the divine SELF—or, as it is called in the Christian faith—with Christ. The mystics of the Middle Ages united themselves with the same SELF and called this state the 'mystic union'. And every Yogi, in the condition called samadhi, unites himself with the same SELF. The state of blessedness can only be reached in one way by each and every human being, regardless of where and when he lives and regardless of whether the colour of his skin is white, black, yellow or red,—for 'God is no respecter of persons' (Acts 10; 34).

Now if this condition of blessed happiness is the same for everyone and means the union of the human consciousness with God, then it also means that all those who experience this union with God are united with each other. The divine SELF is the LIFE in everything and everybody. If we become one with LIFE itself, we become one with everything that lives! We feel ourselves one with every living creature. Our selfish desire ceases and is transmuted into impersonal, universal love that fills our entire being. This love is the true love of Christ. It is far removed from any kind of sentimentality. It is not subject to moods, personal taste and personal inclinations, for it is a state. And irrespective of whether the external form of a person or thing is beautiful or repulsive, good or bad, this true love of Christ goes out to everything selflessly and lives in everything that is alive.

In reality there is no difference between selfish and unselfish love—because there is only *one* love. But the individual who lives in bondage to the person has isolated himself from the Universal and feels love only for himself and for those closest to himself. But those who, in their inner SELF, have experienced the cessation of material limitations and feel themselves at one with the entire living world, expand their consciousness and their love to the whole universe. Their love is not and cannot be selfish, because their love embraces everything and everybody. Such persons love everyone equally, good and bad, just as the sun, with absolute impartiality, pours out its radiance onto both grain and weeds, saint and sinner.

Carrel very clearly describes the various degrees of love:

> 'But this anatomical frontier is only that of one aspect of the individual. It does not enclose our mental personality. Love and hatred are realities. Through these feelings, men are bound to one another in a positive manner, whatever may be the distance between them. To a woman, the loss of her child causes greater suffering than the loss of a limb. The breaking of an affective bond may even bring about death. If we could visualise those immaterial links, human beings would assume new and strange aspects. Some would hardly extend beyond their anatomical limits. Others would stretch out as far as a safe in a bank, the sexual organs of another individual, certain foods or beverages, perhaps to a dog, a jewel, some object of art. Others would appear immense. They would expand in long tentacles attached to their family, to a group of friends, to an old homestead, to the sky and the mountains of their native country. Leaders of nations, great philanthropists, saints, would look like fairy-tale giants, spreading their multiple arms over a country, a continent, the entire world. . . .'

For those who have become one in the divine SELF, this unity is a living reality. They need no earthly form to unite them with each other. They establish no societies or orders to strive for brotherhood. They do not need to. They are united through the identity of the OVERSELF. They experience unity on the spiritual plane, and this unity cannot be influenced, strengthened or diminished by any kind of earthly act or organization—not even by death—as for such individuals there is no death. In the Christian faith this unity is called 'the communion of Saints'.

THE PATH FROM ISOLATION TO UNION—THAT IS YOGA!

The dormant secret of the human soul, the infinite possibilities hidden within the human Self have been known in every part of the world. The proof is to be found in the excavations which have brought to light the ruins of ancient places of worship and the symbolical pictures they contain. These symbols are the same all over the world and are well known to the initiated. The relics of the Mayas, Incas and the ancient Egyptians contain the same secret knowledge, and it is a proven fact that there are illuminated individuals living today who are in possession of this knowledge. For instance the Indian Yogis. In India and Tibet, in remote and sheltered places numerous great masters systematically initiate their pupils into these deep secrets. In Asia, where conditions have been favourable, this secret knowledge of the human soul has been handed down from one generation to the next without a break for over six thousand years.

It took millions of years for tiny one-celled creatures to develop through all the stages of reptile, bird and mammal life up to modern man. But in the short space of nine months between conception and birth the human embryo goes through all phases of this evolution. The development must be repeated each time in its logical sequence for there are no jumps in nature. But nevertheless, the evolution can be compressed in point of time. Spirit stands over space and time because it is infinite and of God. Through persevering research great minds have discovered that mankind does not need to spend further millions of years to go through the very slow process of human development from the present level of the average human consciousness up to the level of divine consciousness. On the contrary, it is possible for us to make this upward transition within a single human lifetime. There are methods with the help of which we can awaken the hidden abilities of our human mind, arouse them from their latent condition, and develop them so that, like gorgeous flowers unfolding into their splendour, they bring forth their most magnificent fruit; our union with the Divine Self. All these methods require the development and expansion of the consciousness. These methods, which have been organized into various systems, are the different Yogas. We might almost say that there are as many methods as there are people, for even the various Yogas are changed and adapted to the individuality of the persons concerned. Indeed, there are as many paths as there are people. But just as we find similar types of persons, so too have the Yogis developed different systems of Yoga for different types of individuals.

The word Yoga has two Sanskrit roots, and the word thus has a double sense. One meaning is 'to immerge'—'to immerge in God.' The other is a parent root of the English word 'yoke' and means 'to couple', 'to connect'. This is a reference to the connection between the OVERSELF and the personal ego living under its yoke. The relationship between the Sanskrit word 'Yoga' and the English 'yoke', German 'Joch', Latin 'jugum' and Hungarian 'iga' is most instructive. And Jesus' words 'Take my yoke upon you . . . for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light' (Matthew 11; 29-30) are also to be considered in this light. Even our normal day-to-day living is a path of Yoga, for every moment brings us experiences which constantly expand our consciousness. But this is the slowest pathway of universal development, and an endless series of incarnations is required before an individual can, in this way, attain the supremely alert condition of true consciousness.

Every occupation that involves concentration is a pathway of Yoga. Every artist travels the Yoga path, for inspiration is a message from the OVERSELF. When the artist concentrates his entire attention on his work, he becomes more and more deeply engrossed in it and is thus enabled to bridge the gulf between his personal ego and higher spiritual planes. The path of Yoga is travelled by the scientist when, in his laboratory, he concentrates on his scientific problems . . . and by the acrobat when he learns to control the forces active within his body. Figure skaters, tight-rope walkers, tumblers and dancers all travel the path of Yoga, for they must achieve the art of moving according to the lines and laws of geometry. The path of Yoga is travelled by everyone whose activity involves concentration, because concentration expands the consciousness.

Even the most talented musician can reach a higher degree of musical perfection through systematic training than if he were to play his instrument in his own way. Just so can we develop our consciousness much more quickly and attain a higher degree of perfection if we consciously and persistently apply the systems of Yoga that have been developed and perfected throughout hundreds of generations. The individual whose consciousness has been awakened and is longing to be freed from bondage wants to progress more rapidly. And he succeeds when he follows the directions and guidance of Yogis and Masters who have attained this goal.

The consciousness causes certain vibrations to flow through the body. The consciousness of a person living on a low plane is occupied with the lower and more material conditions of existence and thus guides the currents of the lower planes through the body's nervous system. The higher the level to which the consciousness climbs, the higher the rate of vibration of the currents flowing through the body. In the healthy individual, the resistance of the nervous system corresponds exactly to the strength of the currents induced by the consciousness. His nervous system is thus completely in tune with the frequency of his consciousness.

But the human consciousness is not always tuned to the same frequency. It varies between lower and upper limits, generally depending on a person's individuality and his momentary condition. In moments of devotion and pure joy our consciousness rises higher, while at other times, when exposed to degrading influences, it sinks below normal. Within certain limits the nervous system is sufficiently elastic to be able to follow these variations without injury. But if an extraordinary event causes the consciousness to go beyond these limits, the unusually strong currents can cause damage to the nervous system. Thus, sudden and exceedingly great joy, like sudden fright or anger can provoke nervous shock, for in both of these emotional states the nervous system is subjected to currents that exceed its resistance.

If the overload is not altogether too great, the nervous system carries the excessive current without suffering extensive damage. But if the overload is too great, the result may be severe damage, shock, paralysis, apoplexy and mental derangement. If an electric circuit is subjected to more current than it can carry, the wires heat up and burn out and the equipment is useless. In the same way, the human nervous system and the body can be ruined by a sudden, excessive flow of current.

Hence we must use care and avoid forcing our consciousness as we work to develop it. If we raise our consciousness too suddenly and if our nervous system is subjected to currents of greater frequency than it has been trained to carry, the organism of the body is destroyed. This explains why, as the Bible tells us, God no longer spoke face to face with those of his servants who came after Moses. They were not sufficiently prepared to be able to bear the high tension of divine currents. They could not raise their consciousness to God. Moses could. His nervous system was strong enough to stand even the heaviest currents. The Bible also tells us that when Moses spoke with the Almighty— that is, when he raised his consciousness to God and identified himself with HIM— his countenance glowed with such radiance that the Jews fled in terror. After that, whenever he had 'spoken with God', he covered his face with a cloth in order not to cause fear among those who saw him. The currents of the divine plane would burn out and destroy the nervous system of an undeveloped individual. For this reason, a wise providence has so constructed mankind that each of us of his own volition, can raise his consciousness only as high as the resistance and elasticity of his nervous system permit.

If a heavy burden is suddenly placed on the shoulders of a weak man, he falls down under the load. But if this weak man systematically exercises and thoroughly strengthens his muscles before he tries to carry the burden—or if he begins with light loads and builds up step by step, day by day in proportion to his increasing strength, he will easily be able to carry the loads that formerly caused him to cave in. Indeed, if he does not stop developing his strength, he can keep on building up his muscles and will be able to carry even far greater loads with ease.

It is the same with the nervous system. If we develop our consciousness cautiously, step by step, the nervous system will have time to build up its strength to carry new currents of higher tension. Then these currents cannot do us any harm. On the contrary, just as the physically weak men can develop muscular strength through right exercise, the strengthening of the resistance of our nervous system means an incalculable gain—not only in regard to the development of the consciousness on the mental plane, but in the physical plane as well.

The different systems of Yoga strengthen and temper the nervous system by various methods so that, as the consciousness rises and the currents increase in intensity, the system is able to carry them without injury. There are Yoga systems which strengthen the nervous system so cautiously and so gradually that they may be applied without risk by anyone. On the other hand, there are systems that aim at reaching the goal in the shortest possible time. In these systems, the nerve centres are activated and stimulated by external means as well as mental in order to get them out of their dormant condition. These Yoga systems can be practised only by persons with an exceptionally strong and resistant nervous system. The masters who teach these Yogas choose their own pupils after hard and highly selective tests, because persons who practise these systems without being adequately prepared can suffer the most serious consequences, such as nervous breakdown or mental derangement. Obviously these systems can only be practised under the guidance of an initiated master. And almost all of the other, less rapid methods should also be so learnt. Hence it would be pointless to discuss all Yoga systems individually in this book, as many of them are not usable by Occidentals. A quick survey of the most important Yogas will be useful, however, as it gives some idea of the great variety.

Among the many Yoga systems there are some that are so similar as to be nearly indistinguishable. The names are different in different localities and, in the course of time, have been adapted to various types of people, so that there are countless variations of the same Yoga system. Samadhi Yoga and Kundalini Yoga, for example, are variations of Raja Yoga. But all Yogas have the same essence and the same goal: to bring about the complete cessation of the personal self; to achieve its union with the Divine Self; to win ETERNITY in the place of our personal, mortal life; to fulfil Christ Jesus' words 'Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall gain life everlasting'. This is the immediate goal of the system called Raja Yoga—the straight, narrow and steep path—the Biblical way of Christ. Actually the other Yogas are merely a preparation for Raja Yoga.

*Hatha Yoga** takes the body as its starting point. The word *Hatha* comes from the Sanskrit *ha* meaning sun and *tha*, moon. Hence, Hatha Yoga is a union of the positive sun energy with negative moon energy. That is, it signifies perfect equilibrium. Hatha Yoga makes the body completely healthy. It develops the nervous system and makes it conscious so that all the functions of the body are brought under the control of the consciousness. In this way the Hatha Yogi liberates himself from the baser desires and passions, and the latter can no longer hinder his spiritual progress. His body becomes a pure vessel, a perfectly functioning vehicle that is truly worthy to be called—after the words of the Apostle Paul—a 'temple of God'.

Laya Yoga is the way of control of the will power. 'Laya' means self control. Laya Yoga is the collective name for several Yogas each of which is concerned with the discovery and development of the occult powers of the mind.

Bhakti Yoga also belongs in this category. It is the Yoga of divine love. The Yogi dissolves his personality in profound devotion and love of God. He completely sacrifices his selfishness. Through concentration and unselfish love, he masters the forces dwelling in love.

Shakti Yoga is the way leading to control over the mighty forces in nature. *Shakti* is the name of the negative, female principle of divine force. *Shakti* corresponds approximately to the concept 'Mother Nature'.

Mantra Yoga is a Yoga of so-called incantations and magic sounds.

Yantra Yoga is the way of mystic experience of geometrical shapes. A variant of this Yoga is

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* For further information, see Yesudian: 'Yoga and Health'.

Mudra Yoga which is concerned with the explanation and use of mystic pictures and symbols.

Dhyana Yoga is a method for control of thought.

Spiritual Yogas include:

Karma Yoga, the Yoga of activity in which the individual ceases to do things for compensation. This is the pathway of action and service but each task is performed unselfishly for the benefit of society as a whole. The individual acts as a selfless tool in the fulfilment of his duty.

Jnana Yoga is the path of wisdom and discrimination. It teaches one to see the meaning of things through spiritual reflection. It is the way of recognition.

Kundalini Yoga is the way to union of the divine powers dwelling within man. Kundalini is the name for the negative magnetic force which exists in a latent state in the lowest psychic centre or chakra located in the lowest vertebra in the spinal column, known in Sanskrit as Muladhara Chakra. When we have aroused this force, it is raised higher and higher, through all the psychic centres—the Chakras—until it reaches the highest Chakra in the grey matter of the brain. This centre is called Chakra Sahasrarapadma, which means 'thousand petalled lotus'. In this centre is located the positive, spiritual, divine force which, when united with Kundalini power, brings fulfilment and complete illumination.*

All these Yogas, and many more that are too numerous even to mention, prepare the individual to be better able to practise Raja Yoga and help him overcome the obstacles that would impede his progress. The exercises of Hatha Yoga, for example, make the body conscious and thus prepare the nervous system for the stronger currents of a higher consciousness. Bhakti Yogis concentrate on Universal Love and approach a higher consciousness through the emotions. Jnana Yogis, through disciplining their thoughts, achieve complete mastery over their mental powers, thus making it easier to arrest the process of thinking, and concentrate their entire attention on the inner SELF. The Yogas of the so-called occult powers reveal the secrets of the subconscious world and thus aid the individual towards recognition of self. Hence each Yoga begins at a different point and follows a different path. But all lead toward the same goal: the immediate goal of Raja Yoga. Actually, Raja Yoga is the crowning conclusion of all Yogas. This is even shown in the name 'Raja Yoga' which means 'Regal Yoga', corresponding to the 'regal art' of mediaeval mystics.

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* For further information, see Yesudian: 'Yoga and Health'.

The exercise of Raja Yoga is so simple and safe that it can be practised by man, woman and child, whether strong or weak, well or ailing.

HOW IS RAJA YOGA PRACTISED?

For those who would travel the path of Yoga and progress spiritually, we must say a few words about the daily living habits that such persons should follow. Here, the best advice can be given in two words: *live moderately.*

Any one who believes that the practice of Yoga demands an ascetic way of living is mistaken. Asceticism, mortification of the body, and complete self-denial may indeed be splendid methods by which to liberate oneself from the many desires of the flesh. But this is no good in itself. Jesus said: 'Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting' (Matthew 17; 21). Thus Jesus confirms that it is necessary to deny and drive out the desires of the flesh in order to achieve purification of our being. Once we have been purified and freed from the devil of the false ego, however, it is not absolutely necessary to follow an ascetic way of living in order to progress in Raja Yoga. On the contrary, in the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna says: 'Yoga is not for the gluttonous nor for those who torture themselves with excessive fasting; nor is it for those who sleep too much or too little.' *Excessive fasting or too little sleep weakens the body and causes disorders.* Primarily it injures the nervous system. Yoga develops the nervous system. This is only possible, however, if the organism is healthy and resistant. If we wish to make good progress in Yoga, we must develop our body to the maximum, get it into the pink of condition.

Buddha teaches: 'Two things shalt thou avoid, O wanderer, useless desires and excessive mortification of the flesh'. To go too far in either direction is wrong and dangerous. Excesses in eating, drinking and sleeping are a great hindrance to progress in Yoga. The preponderance of the physical and the increased flow of life force to digest the excessive food intake are obstacles to mental development. Hence we should eat and drink with good appetite—and above all with a feeling of restful cheerfulness—but we should eat only as much as is needed to keep our body in good health. Our food should be simple and consist mainly of fruit, green vegetables and milk products. As far as possible we should avoid meat. Meat eating is not necessarily an obstacle to our progress, but it is a fact that we can overcome our passions more easily when we refrain from eating animal flesh. Sooner or later, those who practise Yoga lose the desire for meat and eat it only under compulsion. But here too, fanaticism is injurious. It always brings separation instead of unity. Food is only a means to an end, not an end in itself. We have known great Yogis who have eaten meat when compelled by special circumstances to do so. And on the other hand we have encountered some very undeveloped and unpurified souls among vegetarians. Diet is often determined to a considerable extent by climate and other factors beyond our direct control. The ability to reach and enjoy the state of blessed happiness is not dependent on climate. If it were dependent on a meatless dietary, the great spiritual experience would be very easy to attain. In every field of life we must take care not to jump to conclusions hastily: not to let our prejudices cause us to place too much emphasis on non-essentials; not to forget the essence of the matter—the 'inner spirit' in which we must perform whatever duties we are undertaking.

Moderation and the golden mean in everything—and this means our love life too. Christ said: '. . . and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.' (Matthew 19; 12). Thus Jesus clearly says that there are people who sacrifice their love life in order to attain the kingdom of heaven. Those who have come to be ripe for a life of complete continence and are ready to live in this manner, can reach the goal more quickly. For those, however, who have not yet learned to divert their sexual power into higher nervous centres, it is useless to try to force themselves into living a life of continence. *Sexual desire must not be suppressed*, as this can cause great harm. It must be *transmuted*—in the words of occidental psychology—'sublimated'. So far as possible we should lead a pure life. On the other hand, if continence causes constant unrest, these forces should be diverted and led off in a moderate sexual life. A number of the mediaeval mystics lived a normal married life and also reached the goal.

The important thing is that we succeed in consciously guiding our thoughts and feelings toward spiritual matters—that we refuse to occupy our thoughts with erotic ideas. Then our body will follow our consciousness. Our body will not draw our consciousness downward and will not disturb our peace by erotic desires. This does not mean we should simply suppress such desires by a primitive act of will. It *does* mean that *we are to train our mind and our body to the point where no erotic desires arise. For sensuality does not dwell in the body or the senses but in our thoughts. When we learn to control our thinking, the body will be obedient in all things!*

Raja Yoga is practised in our consciousness. It has no outward expression, and no one can see what is going on inside us. Consequently we can exercise Raja Yoga whenever and wherever we wish—during a train ride, while travelling, on board a ship, in the waiting-room, outdoors, beside a pond or a lake, in the forest, at home or abroad, in a quiet spot or amid the hustle and bustle of a busy world. Of course it is easier for us when we are in appropriate surroundings such as a thicket in a shady forest or a clean quiet room. Noisy surroundings are not an obstacle but merely a difficulty that can be overcome through even stronger concentration, thus providing an excellent exercise in self control. Every step forward in Raja Yoga, every result we achieve, is permanent and cannot be lost. If we interrupt our practice—even for many years—we can begin again right where we left off. There is no retrogression. The consciousness is constantly expanding, even during our daily living. Raja Yoga accelerates this expansion. Obviously, a person who withdraws from the noise of the world and devotes his whole life to Raja

Yoga has a better chance of reaching the goal faster than one who practises the exercises in the midst of a feverishly pulsating city life.* On the other hand, our progress is governed by laws of the mind. Persons living in a city can also reach the goal if their desire for freedom and happiness is great enough. It would be useless to retire to the lonely caves of the Himalayas in order to practise there, if we were to take along our selfishness and our longing for the joys of the material world. This would be a much greater obstacle to progress than difficult external conditions. Those who are no longer bound to any outside things can reach the state of blessed illumination in the midst of a busy city, in a rented flat, amongst modern furnishings, amidst the neighbours' noise, to the tune of the family radio—just as if they were alone in the depths of the forest. This point must be emphasized because many persons believe that city life is an obstacle. Those who believe this are hindered *by their belief*, not by city life itself.

We repeat, the obstacles to our progress are always *within* us, not without!

Raja Yoga is worthwhile exercise for those who believe that it will aid them to reach the goal more quickly. For the goal can be reached by everyone. Indeed, everyone must and will reach it. The question is only—when? And this depends on ourselves. Time and space can be overcome. Everyone is entitled to believe that he will succeed in reaching the goal. The possibility dwells within each of us—as it is a matter of psychological fact—unless through our disbelief we block our own path. Disbelief comes from ignorance. Ignorance is overcome through practising Raja Yoga which leads us to self understanding and conviction.

Although it is said that the path of Raja Yoga is the very simplest and that everyone can travel this path, nonetheless it is at the same time the steepest and hardest of all. It is truly the 'steep and narrow path'. Mankind has become so distracted, so enslaved to thousands of things. When once a person is supposed to do nothing else but simply *be*, he is unable to do it.

A great Yogi once said to his pupil: 'Sit opposite me in such a way that your body does not disturb you in any manner.

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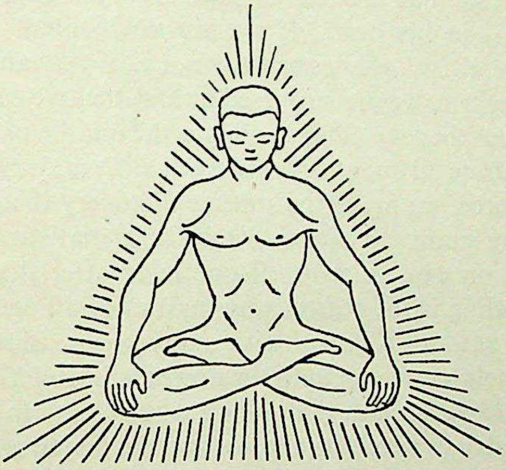
* See also Chapter 2.

Close your eyes. Transfer your consciousness from your head to your heart, for that is where your SELF is. Think of nothing—only your own SELF—until you *are* your SELF'.—That was all! The whole of Raja Yoga is contained in these few words. For when we actually succeed in doing this, we have already reached the goal. The Yogi gave no further explanation. Only now and then when his pupil had an emotional experience, he gave him a bit of instruction. Generally the instruction ran like this: 'If you see or hear or experience something inside yourself, don't bother about it, it is only incidental. Just keep on concentrating your whole attention on your own SELF in your HEART'.

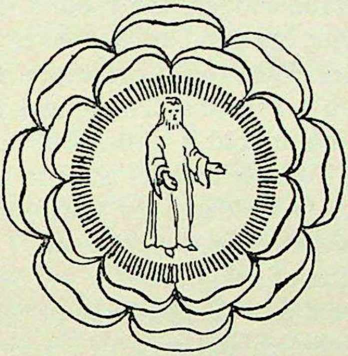


When a Yogi in India tells someone to sit down, this means that he is to be seated on the ground in the so-called 'lotus posture'. It is also best for Europeans to practise Raja Yoga in this position, for in this posture it is easiest to attain complete inner peace and harmony. The forces and currents operating in the human body are in complete equilibrium, and the heart has less work to do because less blood has to be pumped into the legs. And most important of all, this positon is best for the spinal column which is such a vital instrument on our path towards the Overconsciousness. But if this posture is uncomfortable, we should never use force in attempting it. Moreover, it is not necessary to cross our legs as in Padmasana—the 'lotus seat'.

We can also practise in the posture called Sidhasana which is similar to Padmasana except that one leg lies over the other. And if this position is likewise too uncomfortable and distracting, we can practise Raja Yoga in a comfortable armchair. In any event, it is very *important to hold our backbone straight*, but in no case *stiff*. It is best to let our hands rest on our knees. With our eyes closed, we guide our consciousness inward to our SELF.

Let us now try to find our own SELF. Everyone—even the most primitive person—feels that his SELF has its seat in his heart. When someone speaks of himself as 'I' and wants to add emphasis, he taps or points to the middle of his chest. Instinctively he feels that the seat of his SELF—the source of all his strength—is in his heart. If we are not content with merely feeling 'just about' where our SELF is, i.e., if we want to discover the exact centre, we are surprised at first that we cannot find it. It is not such an easy thing to go into the middle of our SELF. If we concentrate all our attention on our SELF and try to enter our SELF by force, we make the strange discovery that this SELF is covered by many envelopes. Only after patient and intense concentration can we strip off one layer after the other. This curious feeling is the reason why mystics of all ages have compared the SELF to a flower with many petals. Slowly, little by little, the petals open up until the flower is in full bloom, and in the very centre we find the radiant OVERSELF. In India this is represented figuratively as a lotus, and the divine SELF, pictured as a man in the centre, is called Ishwara or Krishna. In Europe the mediaeval mystics represented this SELF as a rose and the radiant figure of a man in the centre they called Christ. Chinese mystics call the divine SELF 'Tao'. Both symbols and names represent the same psychological fact.

If we cannot find the centre of our SELF easily and quickly, we must not give up. Determination, patience and persistence lead us victoriously to the goal. The radiant OVERSELF is within us and is waiting until we—like so many others before us—have struggled through, until all the thoughts that rise up to hold us back have finally been stilled. Even today thinking is the Biblical serpent. It leads us astray from the path we want to follow. Again and again, after we have fallen from Paradise, we notice that we have gotten ourselves into the tangle of thoughts. Again and again our thoughts lead our attention away to external things. Never mind! We ask: 'Who is it who has just been thinking?' And the answer 'I' leads us back again to the centre of our concentration. When, after careful practice, we have succeeded in getting close to our SELF—even if only for a short time—our consciousness penetrates deeper and deeper. How deeply we have penetrated is something we only realize when we interrupt the exercise and lead our consciousness back to our person. Only then do we notice the distance we have come back. In a sense it is like sleep. In falling asleep no one observes *when* sleep has begun, as our consciousness slips away unnoticed from the earthly plane. Indeed, the process is similar to driving when we feel as if we were standing still in one spot while the rest of the world glides by. We have the feeling that our consciousness stands still and the earthly plane drops away from us. Only when we awaken do we realize that we have been asleep. In practising Raja Yoga, however, our consciousness does not fall asleep. Quite the contrary! The deeper it penetrates into the SELF, the more awake and aware it becomes. The divine Over-consciousness is the perfect CONDITION OF AWARENESS. In comparison with divine consciousness, our personal life is only a kind of sleep, and the earthly experiences of our consciousness are nothing but dreams!



Union with the divine SELF, the perfect condition of awareness, is likewise a state of perfect happiness. The individual ceases to be a creature and becomes the creator himself. As long as he is thinking, he, with his consciousness, has fallen out of his SELF and identifies himself with his thoughts. Our goal, however, is to reach the state of being—not of thinking about something, but of BEING it!

So that we may clearly understand what is meant by a condition of being, let us consider the following example: Suppose I am sitting on the shore of a lake, looking at the water and concentrating upon it. I can think all kinds of thoughts about the water: that it is a liquid, that it consists of two gases, that its chemical formular is H_2O. If I dip in a thermometer, I also know its temperature, etc. But all of these things are only my *thoughts* about the water. True enough, the process is going on *in* my head, *in* my thoughts, but still I am not water. Hence this is not a condition of *being*. Then too, I can experience the feeling of water. If I wade into it, I *feel* that it is a liquid. I feel directly how dense and how warm or cold it is. But still I *am not* the water. On the other hand if finally I would cease to be separated from the water, if I were to melt into the water, that is, if I myself were to become water, then I could say '*I am water*'—that would be a condition of being.

Let us attempt to attain the condition of being with our own SELF. As long as I think about myself *I am not my* SELF! In this condition I am the thing thought about, because I identify myself with my thoughts. I have fallen out of myself—out of the thinker into the things thought about. I am the person who only exists because the Self,—the creator—is constantly thinking him. We must keep clearly in mind that my true being is the Creator himself, for in reality *I am the thinker* who is constantly creating my person. *But with my consciousness I have fallen out of this true* SELF*—out of the creator*. I identify myself with the thing thought about, with the thing created, *with the person*. I believe that I am the person instead of knowing that I am the thinker, the creator. This is the fall from paradise. How can I get back? If my thoughts have caused me to fall, the way back is to *cease to think*. When I no longer think, my thoughts cannot make me fall and I remain in myself. I cannot be *the thing thought about* because I am not thinking at all. Hence I again become what I really am. Then we can understand why God—when Moses asked him 'Who art thou?'—spoke the words so often misunderstood: 'I AM THAT I AM'. Thought is the serpent, the temptation, the possibility of falling from this divine condition of being into the thing thought about—into the thing created. To eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil means that I identify myself with my thoughts. Let us remember that when we eat a thing, we *become that thing*. We become identical with it. Hence when I identify myself with my thoughts—i.e., I 'have eaten thereof'—I have fallen from my condition of being and have become the thing thought about. I have fallen out of my true self, out of immortality into mortality, into time and space, into the realm of death. The way back is closed to me until I reunite my consciousness with my true being—until I awaken from this dream that I am the thing thought about, the thing created.

When this fact becomes clear to my intellect, it is useful only in that at least I know that I am constantly in the state which the Bible calls 'fallen from paradise'. And I also know that, no matter how much I may *think* about returning to the Garden of Eden, as long as I am *thinking*, I will not find the way! Thoughts have brought me out; only when I cease to think can I find myself again and reunite myself with my divine being. So I cannot and must not *think* about my divine SELF—that does me no good—but I must BE my divine SELF!

But how can I *be* something that I do not know? How shall I BE MY SELF if I do not know this condition?

At least I know that the way to do this is by *not-thinking*. But anyone who has ever tried to stop having thoughts believes this is impossible. Nevertheless it *is* possible!

Let us begin by practising and experiencing the condition of being in easier things, and when we know what a condition of being is, we will have an idea what it means to BE identical with our SELF. As exercises let us take conditions that we know, and let us practise becoming identical with these. We all know that thinking means movement. The opposite of motion is rest. If I cannot stop thinking, the first step in this direction is to quieten my thoughts, to slow them down. Let us try to practise rest as a condition of being. That means that I first *think* about rest. That is the first stage. When I do this with complete concentration, I slowly go into a condition of being quiet, *at rest*. That is the second stage. And if I keep on practising this, I will note that I am no longer thinking about rest—for there is nothing more to be thought about it; I reach a condition which I could express as 'I AM REST'. That is a condition of being!

To think about rest, to be at rest, and to be rest itself are very different things. Let us think, for example, of a person who has a completely peaceful nature. He does not need to think about rest—and he does not think about it—instead, he is rest itself. Everything he thinks, says and does *is done in peace and rest*. He acts in peace and quiet. He never flies off the handle. He never is anything but restful since he is peace and rest itself. Hence as far as rest is concerned, this person is in the heavenly condition of being.

Let us take another example. Everyone wants to be happy. As long as I expect happiness from outside myself, I can never attain it. Or even if I feel happy for a few moments, sooner or later I lose this feeling again. *To be happy* means that 'happiness' and 'I' are separate—two individual entities that are not identical. I must not be merely 'happy' but 'happiness itself' if I am to experience happiness as a state of being. If I am happiness itself, I can never feel unhappy again, because unhappiness cannot come near happiness any more than darkness can approach light. And everyone who is near me or lives near me will feel happy!

When I understand these exercises, then and only then do I know how to practise Raja Yoga. 'Raja' means king. But who is the king of kings? The higher Self—GOD. The way through my own SELF leads me back into the Garden of Eden to God. 'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me' (John 14; 6).

What is GOD?

In the Upanishads, the wise Yajnavalkya teaches us:

'He who dwells in the earth, and within the earth, whom the earth does not know, whose body the earth is, and who rules the earth within, he is thy SELF, the ruler within, the immortal.

'He who dwells in the heaven, and within the heaven, whom the heaven does not know, whose body the heaven is, and who rules the heaven within, he is thy SELF, the ruler within, the immortal.

'He who dwells in light, and within the light, whom the light does not know, whose body the light is, and who rules the light within, he is thy SELF, the ruler within, the immortal.

'He who dwells in the breath, and within the breath, whom the breath does not know, whose body the breath is, and who rules the breath within, he is thy SELF, the ruler within, the immortal.

'He who dwells in the mind, and within the mind, whom the mind does not know, whose body the mind is, and who rules the mind within, he is thy SELF, the ruler within, the immortal.

'He who dwells in knowledge, and within knowledge, whom knowledge does not know, whose body knowledge is, and who rules knowledge within, he is thy SELF, the ruler within, the immortal.

'Unseen, but seeing; unheard, but hearing; unperceived, but perceiving; unknown, but knowing. There is no other seer but he, there is no other hearer but he, there is no other perceiver but he, there is no other knower but he. This is thy Self, the ruler within, the

IMMORTAL'

— om —

Everything that has been and is created is not HE, but merely his creation. Everything that has been created, i.e., that is already 'something' must at one time have become something, and—by virtue of the law of creation—some day pass away, hence has only temporal existence, not real existence. Therefore I cannot imagine God as 'Something' nor name HIM, as everything that has become 'something' out of nothing is only a creature, not the Creator himself. Only God is the eternal being and only of HIM can I say in the eternal present: 'HE IS!' Consequently, from the human standpoint, I can only express the concept GOD thus: GOD is the *eternal void* from which *everything temporal* comes forth. And when I succeed in leaving the condition of the created to return into the Creator, then for a moment I go through the experience of stepping into nothingness, into a void, or in other words, I feel as if I myself were turned into nothingness—annihilated. This feeling of annihilation is what occidental mystics have called 'mystic death'. Only when I have passed through the mystic death can I experience the resurrection; only then can I change from the created into the Creator. When I have become identical with HIM—the Creator—I no longer speak of HIM in the third person. I no longer say 'HE IS THAT HE IS.' On the contrary, I manifest the condition 'I AM THAT I AM.' Moses experienced this condition. He became identical with God, with his true Self, and his will become identical with God's will. But he knew that people do not understand this condition and therefore he said: 'The true God has sent me to you, the God of all creatures whose name is 'I AM THAT I AM.' Those who have had this experience know that Moses expressed this condition in words quite correctly.

Many have attempted to describe this condition of BEING, this great joy of fulfilment and peace, but language is inadequate to give any idea of the truth. Those who have approached this high state with their consciousness, stand at the gate of bliss. Behind them is the created world with the eternal cycle of birth and death; before them the VOID out of which everything has been created. This VOID in which ALL is contained is NIRVANA. The term 'Nirvana' is completely misunderstood by those who confuse it with annihilation. There is no appropriate expression for it, but we come near to its meaning when we call it 'BECOMING ALL'. Those who would enter here must drop every last thought that binds them to the created world—even the thought and the feeling of 'I'. For the SELF is life, the Word, the Logos, and although it is one with the Father, it is the creative principle —the Essence—which constantly takes upon itself the law of birth and death. Whoever would be completely free must give up the last concrete idea, the personal consciousness of self. The SELF is the first thought that is born as an individual which becomes conscious and the last thought that accompanies him to the gate: 'I AM Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending,' (Rev. 1; 8) says the Logos in the Bible. 'I AM the beginning, the middle and the end of all,' says the Logos in the

Bhagavad Gita. But even this consciousness of Self must be dropped. The gate is open; the consciousness drops completely into the Father, melts away into HIM—into THE ABSOLUTE, THE ETERNAL.

This condition cannot be described; it can only be experienced. Indian Yogis call it 'Nirvikalpa Samadhi', while Christian mystics refer to it as 'holy extasy' or 'unio mystica'. The names may differ, but the experience is the same. In the Gita, Krishna gives the seeker after God these directions:

> 'So shall he sit, alone and apart,
> in holy reflection and meditation in GOD,
> controlling his senses and thoughts,
> free of desires, in a clean place
> that is neither too low nor too high.
> There shall he sit on Kusa grass and deerskin;
> his possessions shall be his loin-cloth;
> directing mind and heart only towards the One,
> a master of his senses and thoughts,
> resting in his seat, free of cares,
> so shall he practise Yoga—
> to attain the purity of the soul devoted to God.
> His body, head and neck shall be unmoving,
> and his gaze fixed steadfast to the point of his nose.
> He must be completely detached
> and have no worries.
> His soul full of peace, free of all fear,
> and unshakable in his vow,
> thinking only of ME and meditating on ME,
> with his whole being he yields to ME.
> Resting thus constantly in ME,
> a mighty ruler in his own kingdom,
> he enters into peace, into Nirvana.
> The highest joy settles over his spirit
> when in his heart—bound to God
> and free of sin—no further wish arises.
> He who thus unites himself constantly with God and
> sacrifices himself,

feels within himself the boundless joy
with which GOD's eternal presence fills him.
United with GOD, he has GOD's life.
His spirit is GOD's spirit in all things,
and the true being of all things is in him.
He who knows ME in all things as the ONE, the HIGHEST
and everything in ME,
him I hold fast—and he relinquishes ME not,
no matter how he lives outwardly.
WHOEVER recognizes ME as the ONLY ONE,
that dwells within every creature,
in such a one I dwell and he in ME,
no matter what his path of fortune on earth.'
(Bhagavad Gita, 6th Song)

* * *

II

The Path of the Orient

> 'Like a mother lighting a lamp to shed its brilliance throughout the room, so shall thy words, O Master, ignite the light of truth in my heart.'

THE path of the oriental is the inner one—the pathway of the search within—of becoming one with the divine being dwelling within. It is the path which every one must travel alone and within himself. The oriental path is the individual way.

* * *

Truth changes its body again and again. Truth reincarnates itself just as man does.

Life, the immortal, eternal FIRST PRINCIPLE, does not change; but the matter through which it expresses itself is subject to the law of rotation, the law of birth and death. LIFE continues. Only the body in which it dwells and which it uses as its instrument here on earth, wears out in time and sooner or later is cast off to make room for a newer and more serviceable body. In this manner life develops matter step by step until finally, in accordance with its true destination, matter reveals LIFE and TRUTH in its brilliant perfection. If the matter is coarse, it is not suitable to carry the higher, finer currents of life. It can, therefore, give only a distorted reflection of the truth. In vain does perfection take on material form. As long as the latter is only capable of an imperfect manifestation, perfection on the material plane will only appear as imperfection. But Life takes on these earthly envelopes again and again and impermeates them with its being until they cease to be material ends in themselves; little by little they become worthy instruments for the transmission and expression of truth.

The body of every God-man is a perfect instrument, an instrument which manifests perfectly the divine SELF.

The divine SELF dwells in each of us, but imperfect matter manifests this SELF inadequately; only now and then does the perfection which animates us shine through. The manifestation of this perfection can be discovered in even the most hardened criminal, for there is no one who is not capable of unselfish love for mother, child, wife, husband or someone else. Indeed, unselfish—though misguided—motives sometimes lie at the bottom of such a criminal's fall into error. Unselfish love is the love of the divine SELF. Wherever this love reveals itself the divine SELF is manifest. No one could live were it not for the OVERSELF within. For the OVERSELF is life itself, but through the imperfect human being it cannot show its true essence.

The present is a result of the past, and the fruit of the seeds we sow today will be harvested in the future. The insufficiently conscious individual is born again and again until, little by little, his experiences have lifted him out of ignorance; until he recognizes the true meaning of life and strides with firm steps up the shortest path towards truth.

As long as we live in a state of ignorance about ourselves, our life on earth is a series of disappointments. The primitive individual imagines he can guide his fate as he wishes and everything must happen the way he wants it. But soon he notices that a much higher power intervenes again and again in his life in a way that compels him to obey. Any disobedience will—as he understands it—result in his being punished. The primitive individual takes credit for all his successes, so he imagines that this invisible power only comes into his life when it is angry with him, when it wants to avenge something or punish him. Fear and humility seize him, his pride and conceitedness are shaken, and after he has recognized the superiority of this unknown power, he calls it GOD. Thus man learns the concept 'GOD.' In the imagination of the primitive individual, God is always a fearful power that must be placated with offerings and sacrifices—oft-times human sacrifices—in order to save the group from his visitations, plagues, and penalties. As man climbs upward, his conception of God also develops. Little by little he begins to believe that not only his failures but also his successes come from God and that God not only punishes but also blesses. Now the concept of God is divided into a good power and an evil one, and mankind goes on trying to banish the fear of God through sacrifices and prayers.

Time passes and the individual gathers new experiences which he brings with him with each new incarnation. In this way his inner sight and inner hearing develop little by little. He opens his eyes and begins to recognize the infinite wisdom manifested in nature. When he sees the blessing of the earth—rain—coming down from the sky, he believes that God too must be up there. He lifts up his eyes to the heavens and says: 'Great is the Creator over us!'

Little by little man realizes that God is good, that all his manifestations are full of blessings, and that man's many failures, reverses and sufferings are the results of his own ignorance and lack of development, not a punishment sent by God. Indeed, at this point man sees that the many blows of fate which he has previously felt to be harmful are in reality blessings in disguise. Only because of his ignorance and false conceptions did he imagine them to be reverses. As Epictetus said: 'Things themselves are never bad, only the way you think of them'. Little by little man opens his ears for an inner voice which teaches him that God is the loving Father who will embrace even the most hardened sinner as soon as he turns to HIM. To HIM we should turn with full confidence in all our pain and suffering. HE gives us comfort and help and removes all fear and anxiety. For the only thing we have to fear is our own ignorance, not God. God is not a God of revenge. He is a God of Love, and love pardons. It is not God's will that we suffer. HE holds his helping hand in readiness to deliver us from the sufferings we have caused by our own blindness.

Little by little the veils of ignorance drop away. Gradually our knowledge grows until mankind realizes his days here on earth are not accident, that there is a goal we must attain, a destiny we must fulfil. We must find truth, we must learn to know the connection between the Creator and mankind. Thousands of years have passed since man, after conquering his material surroundings, developed to the point of asking 'Who am I?' The answer must be found. God placed the truth in mankind, and man cannot resist his innermost truth. For again and again truth whispers to him until he understands that the purpose of life is to find his SELF—GOD!

When man has realized this, he will cease to shut himself off from God in senseless fear. On the contrary, he will consciously apply himself to coming closer and closer to HIM. He will turn to GOD with his whole soul. He will feel an unquenchable thirst for GOD. He will long with all his heart for union with GOD—until GOD hears his prayers and fills his thirsting soul with the light of TRUTH—and the human consciousness unites with God.

A person who has thus been enlightened and redeemed—filled with love for his fellow man and recognizing his true predestination—begins to proclaim the truth in order to help others out of suffering and ignorance. Those who thirst after truth follow him and become his disciples. The master teaches his disciples the plain truth, and by passing on to them the experiences by which he has reached the great goal, he helps them up the inner pathway of the soul. The seed he sows in their heart sends down its roots, and the tree of life grows upward to maturity. Then the disciples who have reached the goal and become filled with the truth leave their master to devote their lives to wisdom, love and service. They teach their fellow men and proclaim the Word.

The ear of the imperfect individual is not open for the naked truth. His concepts are still cloudy, and while the word he hears passes from his ear through his mind to his consciousness, it becomes blurred, dim and unrecognizable. The great masses are still unable to understand truth in its essence. That is why it is necessary to clothe truth in understandable terms, to set up doctrines and regulations, and to prohibit people from altering or interpreting them in any way they happen to wish. The teachings of the master are the kernel, and his followers and disciples have the task of making this kernel accessible and understandable for the masses. The primitive individual is not yet sufficiently advanced to be able to lift himself to spiritual heights. He wants to pray to God in visible, tangible form. That is why the disciples clothe spiritual truth in symbols corresponding to the degree of development of the people. Thus the holy secrets of the inner pathway of the human soul have been cloaked in symbolic words, rites and ceremonies in order to adapt them to the spiritual requirements of the people concerned. In this way religions, dogmas and ceremonies arise. Like a jewel box they contain the spiritual teaching of the Master—the TRUTH.

Religion is the body of truth

Everything that has been born must also die. Religion is a body, and a body is mortal. Dogmas are made up of words which, in time, wear out and lose their force. Dogmas which derived their original strength from their immutability gradually become rigid and stiff as a result of this inflexibility. Language is a living thing. It is constantly creating new words and casting off others that are old, worn out and useless. The dogmas that have gradually solidified are not suitable to express the living spirit of truth. They lack the necessary elasticity to keep abreast of changing times, progress, science and the growing spiritual requirements of the people. The words are empty, and seekers after truth no longer find the spirit of truth behind the ceremonies. The rituals no longer satisfy; the founders of the religion who once created such ceremonies to clothe the truth they proclaimed are long since dead, and through the centuries their symbols have passed through many hands. Their true meaning has disappeared. With the development of the human intellect and the progress of science, it is no longer possible to accept a literal interpretation of the symbolic language. Finally there is nothing left but the empty shell that once contained the truth. A shell without the spirit of truth is no better than a corpse. Once again the people—thirsting for truth—wander in darkness and seek a helping hand to guide them out of the gloomy forest of confusion and trouble. And again and again God has mercy on the people; time after time he sends a teacher who passes on his inner light to those who are ready for it,—a teacher who guides them on the path of illumination, the path to God. Once again the disciples leave their teacher, again they teach their people the truth—clothed in the appropriate, acceptable form.

And once again a new faith, a new religion has arisen.

Again and again truth—like people—clothes itself in new bodies until the body which carries it becomes a perfect means of expression for the spirit dwelling within.

Thus were founded the religions of the ancient Mayas, Assyrians, Sumerians, Chaldeans, Egyptians and the classic mythology of the Greeks and the Romans. These religions were born, flowered for a time, and died. But in their symbols, dogmas, rites and ceremonies, the initiated recognize the same truth that animates every religion on earth. *There is only one truth*; but the forms in which it is expressed vary, depending on the requirements of the times and the people.

If we consider world history, we will see how, everywhere, great cultures and their religions have arisen, prospered and disappeared. But there is one part of the world where geography and topography combine to offer shelter from historical events and developments. This is the Himalaya. These mighty mountains, with their uncounted ranges, their inpenetrable gorges, their difficult climatic conditions, are an area where history just does not happen. That makes this region all the more suitable as a haven for the Yogis and hermits who have withdrawn into its valleys and caves, away from the world and the impositions of the crowd. For thousands of years, those who have settled in these mountain valleys are people who, after casting off all externals, have been living only for the inner essential. They no longer need to clothe truth in words and expressions. They know truth in its naked reality. They live truth and live only for truth. Those who come to the Himalayas to seek out these holy men—the Yogis—and settle near them are persons who are striving to find pure truth and who need guidance in order to climb up the steep and narrow path. They come asking for advice from those who have already reached the goal. Sooner or later they too will reach the goal and learn the secret of the merging of the human consciousness with God. Hence it is no longer necessary to clothe truth in symbols, dogmas and ceremonies. Those who live together thus walk along this path, each by himself. They do not talk about truth; they *live* truth.

The spoken word is a covering, a robe, and no matter how well it may cover the truth, it *does cover* it and is not truth itself. The ABSOLUTE, in its essence, cannot be expressed in words; for then it would cease to be ABSOLUTE. We can only know absolute truth—we can only *be* truth—through complete identity with it in a fully developed consciousness. Yogis travel this path alone. They do not need to learn through words what those have seen who 'have eyes to see'. They become seeing ones themselves. They recognize, they see and experience TRUTH in its absolute essence. TRUTH never changes; it is eternal. Those who are blind to the truth need some form of religion. The blind can engage in disputes about the differences in form; those who see and know TRUTH—standing above time and space—recognize the *one and only* truth in every religion. When those who live in truth come together—though they may come from opposite ends of the earth—they do not discuss truth; they cannot discuss it at all, for they are *already* one in truth.

Yoga is not a religion; it is crystallized truth. This is the reason why Yoga has remained unchanged for thousands of years. Its secrets are guarded by those who *see*. There is no error, nothing which, in the course of time, must be improved, corrected or changed. Among the peaks of the Himalayas there are no currents of thought subject to fashion—coming into vogue and disappearing again—for in the hearts of the Yogis in their Himalayan retreat, there dwells the eternal, unchanging TRUTH itself.

The radiant power of truth is very strong. It is quite natural that such a special area as the Himalayas—where countless great Yogis and masters and their followers find a peaceful refuge—exercises a strong power of attraction. From all over the world people who hunger and thirst after truth come to the Himalayas, and their profound, fervent faith in God enhances the magic radiation of this place. This holy atmosphere makes itself felt for a great distance round about, and it is not strange that it is reflected as a deep piety and propensity for religion in the soul of the people living in adjacent countries. Since time immemorial India has drunk from this well of wisdom and knowledge. Every stone, every clod of earth exudes an air of tradition millenniums old. Indians who are as yet undeveloped intellectually and not yet ready for pure truth, live in profound religious piety and are zealous believers in the religious group to which they belong. Regardless of their form of worship and their concept of God, their fervent prayers and their profound and unshakable faith are certainly heard and answered by the one and ONLY heavenly FATHER, for HE knows that behind and above the god of their primitive intellect, HE himself is the GOD for whom their pious souls are thirsting.

India has known numerous religions in the past, and even now there are very many of them alive in this vast territory. Throughout thousands of years, India has preserved, in the heart of her children, a sense of profound piety and the inner values of religion; this is the best basis for crystallizing truth out of primitive beliefs. Everyone in India *respects* and honours all religions and every religious expression. People know that it is one and the same God who is worshipped in all religions, as there is but one God; only the forms of religion are different. Though His names may be many, there is only one true living God. Every prayer that is spoken with reverence reaches HIM. In India people are not ashamed of their religious feeling; they receive honour and respect for it, never ridicule!

The customs which still prevail today in India prove that this nation, with its deep sense of piety, was predestined to preserve TRUTH for all times. This predestination was sealed by India's geographical position.

* * *

For two thousand miles India is surrounded by ocean and glittering sandy beaches. When the sun rises, the blue of the sea and the blue of the sky seem to fuse into one another. But when the sun goes down, the water and the heavens are divided by a sharp line. Along the eastern borders the land has few hills and few rivers, but the latter suffice to nourish the vegetation and cattle in this tropical region. On the western coast a mountain range rises in the oldest centre of the Dravidians near Tinevelly and stretches like a giant snake northward to Bombay. In the south is the island paradise—Ceylon—and to the north, the mightiest mountain ranges in the world, the Himalayas. Truly, in every direction India was provided with natural protection, as if the gods had foreseen what she needed in order to fulfil her destiny. The ocean, her rivers and her mountain peaks show how generous nature has been. Once the freedom of each citizen was his birthright. *In this country the kings have been philosophers and philosophers, kings.*

When a stranger comes to India with the intention of getting thoroughly acquainted, even though he may stay for several years, he can only obtain a superficial impression. No matter how enthusiastic he may be about the Orient, he will, at most, succeed in being able to recognize some of the numerous races so as to distinguish the southern from the northern. Although he may indeed have the gratifying feeling that he has seen India and knows it, he will still be far from knowing India as she really is. Scientists, scholars, archaeologists, historians, artists, musicians and writers have endeavoured to study and record the particulars of this strange land. Without doubt their impressions have been profound and each has certainly attempted to make a clear judgement in his own special field. The ideas and views these scholars have been able to grasp with their intellect during the years spent in study have been passed on to the occidental world as knowledge about India. This well-meaning work, to which in many cases a whole lifetime has been devoted, may be the best that human effort can achieve. But however perfectly the various phases of the subject are treated, such a book can offer only a sum total of many individual impressions. Really to know India in its entirety and to grasp the true meaning of this huge nation is a challenging—and often overwhelming—task even for an Indian. Even her own sons are scarcely able to perceive Mother India's full greatness and the vast panorama of her ancient glory. One can only know India when one knows her past. An almost impossible task, for time and space have never been important factors in India, and only in rare cases have dates been recorded. Hence there is almost no fixed point of departure for the study of India's history. All is lost in legend; only the abundance of gigantic architectural and artistic works—some in a remarkable state of preservation—proves that these legends were once reality. India's past and the true meaning of the word 'India' cannot be understood with the aid of the intellect alone. It must be sensed; it must be felt and experienced. An occidental scholar once said: 'The more I see of this country, the more I see of its past. And the more I see of its past, the more clearly I see that this past is still living today. The pathway I must follow appears like a trail through a fogbank. A thousand years would be too short to see everything'.

Naturally the Indian's eye sees more; for the past is born in his soul and whether he realizes it or not, he carries India's past within himself—in his blood and nerves, in the very marrow of his bones. Every Indian is a piece of India's past, present and future. When an Indian baby opens its brilliant black eyes for the first time, they reflect the nation's mourning over the great and glorious past, and this melancholy expression can be seen in the face of every adult Indian, whether he is aware of the reason or not. This past living on in his soul drives him ever onward to seek higher goals, to strive for liberation from earthly bondage, to long for God! India is his great Mother who shows him the path to be travelled, and as he drinks from the well of tradition and the fountain of truth and patience, he endeavours to serve GOD.

India once belonged to the Dravidians whose culture developed for several thousand years. Just as gold must go through a process of refining and purification, the Dravidians gradually rose above the other races, and it became their duty to help those living on a lower plane, encouraging and guiding them until they reached the level of Dravidian culture. At the same time they carefully guarded their secret traditions which were handed down from generation to generation, from father to son. Each new generation inherited what its forefathers had been guarding and preserving for ages: the early wisdom, the secret religious teachings, the secrets of magic, the secrets of medicine—called Ayurveda—and most important of all the solution to the puzzle of life itself. Their purified spirituality proclaimed to the Indian world the great secret of man: the solution to the secret of man's own Self. 'Indeed a nation chosen to preserve tradition and truth,' remarked a wise old man who is himself fulfilling this obligation by teaching the many pupils who come humbly to him from all parts of the country.

Tales of India's fantastic riches, her gems, her treasures, her palaces of gold and silver travelled over the seas and stimulated the imagination of conquering peoples. Ever since Alexander the Great, power-hungry invaders, throughout the course of history, have attacked India again and again from all directions. The Indians fought bravely to defend their country against the attackers, but they were finally unable to withstand the constantly recurring aggressions, and, little by little, foreign tribes came in and settled. Through the various invasions during the course of thousands of years, the Dravidians were forced farther and farther to the south. In all parts of the country, ruins of temples and other structures are mute evidence that the Dravidians were once present; silent testimony to the high cultural level they attained. Today tourists and travellers admire these ruins. 'A mighty world,' they say, 'but its fame belongs to the past.' Yes, the earthly fame and the earthly might of the ancient Dravidians is over. But the great trials and tribulations that India suffered so long are part of her predestination. Everything is good as it is. God knows better than our limited human intellect what is good for us. When India's Golden Age came to an end and great poverty overtook her people, the nation was richer by a profound experience. The people learned that earthly goods and possessions are perishable and that happiness is not in riches but must be sought elsewhere. Instead of India's former magnificence, foreign visitors now see decadence and ruins. But they find an extremely active life in India's religious establishment where spiritual treasures are preserved and passed on from one generation to the next.

Every one, from the most primitive individual to the most advanced seeker after truth, can find, in India, the spiritual nourishment corresponding to his stage of development. A person on a low plane of development manifests his faith differently from one on a higher plane; hence the difference in spiritual nourishment. The great masses have no ability for independent judgement. They do not possess the spiritual insight to be able to see truth—God—in all its forms and manifestations. They need guidance and find their comfort and solace in religion.

Let us enter a temple as dusk is gathering, when the copper gongs are sounding, the evening ceremonies beginning and the portals of the temples opening unto thousands of believers. Here is life! Life in faith, concentrated on truth. The soft light of oil lamps wraps the altars in a mystic twilight, and the believers feel the presence of God. Priests and teachers go about their duties. The people's hearts are warmed. With pious attention the congregations listen to the teachings of their priests, and rapt in meditation they send their prayer to God. The ceremonies are completed, and sacrificial flowers and fruit are laid before the altar. After their vesper services, the congregations go home with God's blessing and peace in their hearts.

For the Indian, life would be quite meaningless and empty if he were to miss his daily devotion. He considers it his sacred duty to provide for his spiritual needs just as he gives food to the body. From the poorest man in the street to the greatest leaders of the nation, faith is the Indian's daily bread. The temple is a refuge in time of fire, flood or famine, and the temple is his home when he is blessed with happiness and joy. His religion fills the greater part of his life, and from it he gets comfort, strength and spiritual peace. Even more, his faith shows him the path he must travel during the few fleeting years he spends on earth.

The moment an Indian baby opens its eyes, it sees thousands of manifestations of faith round about. In India it would seem quite impossible—even unimaginable—for people to live without showing their religious faith, as is the normal practice in Europe. From earliest childhood the Indian is accustomed to living in his faith and to seeing people of other religions give expression to their beliefs. He does not gape at them, for his parents have taught him to honour and respect the religious customs of others. Thus when religious processions pass him on the street, he does not make fun of them. Instead, he *adds* his own devotion. He knows that every expression of faith, regardless of its form, rises to one and the same God and is accepted by Him; for there is only ONE God.

I too was brought up amid religious manifestations of many kinds. From early childhood, I saw thousands of fanatical believers assembled at their festivals in the centre of Madras. I watched them during the ever recurring processions: men, women and children, from the palsied grandfather on down to the youngest babe with its big, black, credulous eyes. Believers of every age were there in the street, welded into *one* devotion, giving frank and open expression to their profound faith. When the giant statues of bronze, silver and gold are carried about, all eyes are upon them in rapt concentration, and they ignite the flame of love and true piety in the hearts of the worshippers. Foreigners judge falsely when they regard these images as idols. In reality, they are no more idols for the Indian than pictures of the Holy Trinity, Jesus, Mary and the various saints are for the Christian in his church. Just as the educated Christian worships and honours the idea symbolized in the statue, not the statue itself, so too does the educated Indian worship the idea, the spirit behind the metal statue carried about during religious ceremonies. In both East and West, the masses still need the visible shape. They are not yet spiritually advanced enough to experience God without the help of an outer form. Religions of all ages have used appeals to the senses through shape, colour, sound, and fragrance to help express an idea and awaken feelings of devotion. To lift the worshipper's soul, every religion uses statues, paintings, and incense. Spiritual leaders know the laws of the soul and know the means that can be used for its edification. But those are only aids, means towards an end, not the end itself.

But let us return to the worshippers in Madras. Music and blasting trumpets shake the very soul of the faithful, and with loud singing the procession moves forward in waves of devotion. The spiritual experience and the enthusiasm of the worshippers are the same whether the procession occurs at noon or at midnight. At mid-day, the crowd pays no attention at all to the scorching sun; the fire of their faith burns hotter in them than the heat of the sun's rays. Men and boys, with bells on their ankles and stringed instruments in their hands, sing hymns of thanks to the heavenly Prince Raja-Kumara, the son of King

Dasara, or to the goddess Parvati, wife of the god Shiva, or to Laxmy, goddess of beauty and happiness, wife of the god Vishnu. These and many other gods and goddesses are symbolic figures in Indian mythology. To list and describe them would go beyond the scope of this book. But in order better to illustrate Indian thinking, it is important to mention that these many gods and goddesses, with their various characteristics, are considered as so many forms of the creative power of God, personified symbolically. Primitive people, of course, do not think of the spiritual forces in these gods and goddesses, as their intellect is unable to grasp such matters. These spiritual concepts have been clothed in rich, colourful symbols, because the masses can understand philosophical truth only in legends and parables. Indians follow their religious rules blindly, and in pious songs to heaven they express their spiritual longing for God. But not only in song do they praise God. Their devotion is also expressed in motions of the body, in sacred dances. It is a commonplace sight in Indian religious processions for a dancer, with little bells on wrists and ankles, to take stiff-legged steps forward, then little steps backward, thus advancing slowly while keeping time to the music. With every movement he shakes the bells and thus heightens the rhythm of the accompanying music. His movements can scarcely be called aesthetic; on the contrary, they are more or less tedious. Nevertheless his fixed gaze and stiff gestures radiate a heavenly blissfulness—such tremendous power of faith experienced—that the crowd bows down with reverence before him and, with folded hands, honours the sacred manifestation of God. In no sense is this idolatary; nor is it worship of a person. For it is not the dancer *himself* who is the object of devotion, but the Spirit of God *through him*. For occidental spectators and even for many Indians who have been brought up in the Christian faith, this all seems strange and fantastic. But we should not criticize this expression of faith. On the contrary, we must respect it as it springs from a genuine, earnest belief and offers the masses happiness and spiritual satisfaction, enabling them to bear with peace and humility the heavy burdens of their life.

Piety and faith are the deep and permanent facts of life in

India. Every important event is based on them. Indian marriage customs also reflect the spiritual attitude of the oriental. There is one such custom which young married couples in occidental lands would scarcely wish to emulate. Shortly after the wedding ceremony, the newly married couple sets out on a pilgrimage to give expression to their sacred intention to dedicate the whole of their life together to God. Garbed in prescribed yellow linen clothing, they hum softly as they walk through their town or village, followed by a sexton who accompanies their monotonous singing by beating a gong or a drum. The music is modest indeed, but by virtue of its very monotony, it has a powerful effect on the mind. The approach of the newly wedded couple can be heard for a great distance, and even long after they have passed, one can still hear the melancholy humming and the rhythmic beats of the gong or drum. Simple as it is, this music carries deep feeling and has a powerfully moving effect on the soul. Even an educated Indian who wears European clothes, when he hears these sounds, will pause wherever he is—in a tram, a market or other public place—fold his hands, close his eyes, say a prayer, and send his blessing after the young couple. Other people leave their homes, and women honour the young couple with dishes of coconuts, flowers and burning camphor. Remembering when they made this pilgrimage themselves, they ask God's blessing on the young husband and wife because they are so unspoiled, so pure, and so filled with the love of God. The young newly-weds are not ashamed and not embarrassed by the fact that people are watching them wherever they go. On the contrary, they are conscious of the importance of this religious act and accept with dignity the public interest expressed along their way. Once arrived at their destination, they make an offering of their hair, sacrificing to God the beauty of their heads as a sign of humility, obedience and service. Their heads are shaven smooth. Thus even the most beautiful couple learns and attests the fact that the beauty of life does not consist in outward appearances but is to be found in the same place where God and Love dwell—in the secret chamber of the heart.

I must admit one is forced to smile at the very thought of a young and attractive European or American couple with their heads shaved merely to prove they believe that the inner values in life are of greater importance than outward appearance and physical beauty. What young woman of the Occident would be willing to sacrifice her precious permanent? But we cannot make such simple comparisons. The paths of the Orient and the Occident are different; yet they meet at the goal. The fact of the matter is that this custom of shaving the heads of newly-weds puts their love to a hard test. If their affection survives the operation, it is certain that their love is based on inner spiritual bonds, not mere outward appearance. With shaven heads they leave the place of pilgrimage and go back the same way they came. Again the crowds they pass bless them and pray for them. At home, they begin their life together in an atmosphere of purity and devotion. They share their feelings of sacred dedication and thus begin their physical and spiritual union.

Such religious practices are a necessity for millions of Indians, for the great struggle to reach a higher spiritual level is just as enduring as the successes achieved in their earthly life. From their earliest youth into adult life and on into old age, Indians feel it absolutely necessary to give an accounting for the years of their lives and for the joys they experience. When in old age a married couple find they have 'overdrawn their accounts,' when they feel that the debit side of their lives outweighs their credit balance, they make another pilgrimage—with their decrepit old feet and slow, faltering steps—along the same path they followed on their wedding day, to the place they visited in their youth, a shrine they hold sacred forever. There they meditate and pray for God's forgiveness and grace before they cross life's threshold into the great beyond.

For Indians a pilgrimage is an outward symbol of the inner, secret path of the soul to GOD. That is the explanation for this widespread religious custom. From the southernmost tip of Ceylon to the high Himalayas this belief brings the masses to the sacred Ganges, or as we call the river—Ganga-Nadi. They make this pilgrimage to bathe in its cleansing waters and free themselves of sin. Every faithful Hindu resolves to go, at least once in his life, to this sacred place and immerse his body in these holy waters. Such annually recurring mass migrations and pilgrimages to religious centres clearly illustrate India's powerful religious faith. Nothing can shake the foundation of the Indian's piety, nothing can weaken it; it stands like a mighty wall, on the rock of ages, where it has stood for countless generations.

I would be the first to admit that Indian religious practices include many that are repugnant. Even today, for example, certain sects observe the bloody rites of animal sacrifices. Such religious aberrations are not only repelling to people of the Occident, but are also embarrassing for Indians who hold other opinions. Actually such practices are evidence of misdirected and improperly manifested religious feeling. In a country as huge as India there are bound to be defects here and there. To discuss them in detail, however,—especially in such a short space as this chapter—would be to give a false over-all impression of that great country. Nevertheless, in order to avoid the appearance of being prejudiced as an Indian, I shall quote a European who has recorded with absolute objectivity his experiences in India. There have been not a few visitors from the Occident who have been anything but objective in reporting on their travels, and some of them have written only about such defects. The well-known Indiologist Dr. Erwin Baktay, who looked at India impartially, has this to say:

'During the course of the years I spent in India I had many great and beautiful experiences and also many negative and repugnant impressions. But when I considered the sum total of my observations with the necessary perspective, the blemishes paled into insignificance. They disappeared under the brilliance of the truth and beauty I had seen. The universal, over-all view takes in everything. But when we strike a pose of antipathy and rejection, we classify things according to our own egoistical, personal point of view and dissect the living organic whole like a corpse. That is why the great embrace of love and compassion is wiser and fairer than a point of view based on analyzing and picking a thing to pieces in petty criticism. I experienced India as a great whole. I saw the composite picture of Indian life, its great human facts, its great organic truth—and in this over-all picture, the blemishes and disturbing details shrank into nothingness. Even the most magnificent cathedral loses its meaning and its great beauty as soon as we stop marvelling at the whole building and start looking through a magnifying glass at each weathered, cracked or mouldy stone in its walls. Is the true image the one that presents a photograph of every defect and each bit of dirt? A composite view takes in all the elements to give us the whole living picture, whereas critical analysis pretends that we could grasp the essence of Notre Dame by destroying the great cathedral, pointing to the pile of rubble, and saying 'That is the reality'.'

The penitents—generally known as 'fakirs'—to be seen in every street and at every turn of the road make an unpleasant impression on strangers in India. Most of these penitents are convinced that in this life or a previous one they have committed sins by yielding to the desires of the flesh. To atone for past misdeeds they combat the sensations and desires of the body, enduring the greatest hardships and self imposed privations. They refuse every bodily comfort and think up the most bizarre tortures in order to gain complete mastery over the body. In actual fact they do indeed reach this goal and are able to bear up with unfeeling indifference under tortures which would be terrifying for the average individual. One of the mildest forms of self-torture, for example, is to cover the body with ashes and sit motionless day after day, under the blistering heat of the tropical sun. Surprising as it may seem, these penitents neither suffer from headaches, nor are they in danger of sunstroke. The fakirs who lie for hours on beds of nails are known throughout the Occident from the many reports published by travellers in India. I once saw a fakir with a hundred lemons each suspended on a separate wire that were hooked into his flesh. He had even pulled a wire through each cheek and hung a lemon on each end. It was a terrifying sight. There are hundreds and hundreds of variations of this form of self-punishment, and it is not surprising that strangers regard this as abnormal or even as a sign of mental derangement. But let us not forget that this abnormality harms no one and is not dangerous for the community—something that cannot be said for most of those hundreds and thousands of alcoholics usually regarded as 'normal' in the Occident. For the penitents themselves, the only consequences are positive and useful as they attain a degree of self-control that is almost unthinkable for the average individual. *Self-control* is just the opposite of mental derangement!

Such fakirs must never be confused with the Sanyasi, the Sadhu and the Yogi. The latter are wise and holy men who live in the highest spiritual spheres. They are not to be compared with the fakirs one sees in public streets and near temples. *It is extremely rare that one meets a true Yogi*, for they usually live all alone in remote places or within the circle of their disciples. Only rarely do they go about among people and when they do, nobody who does not know them personally will have any idea that they are Yogis. We can be sitting next to one on the tram without knowing it; *for spiritual heights have no outward 'trade-marks*'. A wise man or a master will never punish himself. Even less would he sit in the street to be an object of curiosity and pity for every one who passes by. Only people with a primitive level of intelligence do such things.

Every open display of religious belief is a characteristic of primitive people on a low spiritual plane. Nevertheless it is necessary, for faith welds people into a great, complete community. Unity is like a great pillar that holds people's fate together. It is the greatest force on earth.

In India great masses of people live in unspeakable misery. How could they endure their hard lot in life if they got no strength from their faith? The Indian knows that a bitter fate in life is the consequence of sins committed in a previous life. If in a previous existence he did not follow what he was taught, if he persisted in living selfishly, his eyes are now opened by troubles in this life. He sees his errors and mistakes, and his present existence gives him a chance to make up. This is his destiny—his karma—from which he cannot escape.

The great masters, who for thousands of years have been teaching the laws of the mind, have always pointed out that the forces active within the mind are identical with those acting outside in the universe. The forces at work in the human mind—yours and mine—are the same as the forces at work in the world that, seemingly, is outside us. If, therefore, I set a force in motion in my mind, this same force, obeying the law of resonance, is set in motion in the world outside me, and a change takes place in my destiny. The same thing applies in reverse. If I set a force in motion in the outer world, the resonant forces within myself are moved as well and, depending on whether I have set a positive or negative force in motion, I feel within myself a beautiful, joyful feeling or a torturing sensation that pains my conscience.* I cannot make a single gesture, nor draw a single breath, without setting off a chain-reaction of never-ending consequences, both in the outer world and within my own mind. Our earthly life is nothing but the complex linking-up of all the consequences of our past deeds, both in this life and in previous existences. These past deeds and misdeeds make up our destiny which, like a mirror, remorselessly reflects back upon ourselves all the forces we have set in motion in the past. The law of relationship between the inner structure of the mind and our personal destiny is called 'karma' in Sanskrit. The Indian knows that he cannot escape the law of karma. He knows that he himself has sown the seeds of his own fate and that he must reap the fruits, be they sweet or bitter. He knows better than to try to put the blame on someone else. If things go badly, he will carry his own burden willingly. He knows that each sorrow, each visitation means that he is paying off an old debt to his karma. He knows that nothing happens by accident; everything happens by cause and effect. It is not an accident that determines the family and the caste in which he is born and hence the opportunities he will enjoy through his life.

The caste system, too, is an institution which strangers find hard to understand and which they unanimously condemn. In many respects they are doubtless right, but let us try to look at the caste system from the Indian point of view.

In the third century B.C. India had a very wise ruler named Asoka. He was one of the greatest minds the human race has ever produced. Under his reign India went through that magnificent age in which most of her splendid works of architecture and literature were created. These artistic treasures still arouse our admiration today. Besides architecture, literature and the plastic arts, all branches of science reached the peak of their development during Asoka's reign. Asoka is reported to have concerned himself with science, displaying great interest in medical knowledge that would benefit his people. The medical science of Ancient India was known as 'Ayurveda' and some of its books are 5,000 years old. These books show that India's early medical men knew about the action of bacteria in causing disease, the secrets of the glandular system, the brain, the spinal column, the heart, the circulation of the blood, and many subjects some of which occidental medical science has not yet discovered or has only begun to explore in the last hundred years. In India these books are handed down from father to son and their secrets are closely guarded except in very rare instances when someone wishes to use them as a source of information. And this is always in the public interest, never out of mere curiosity. In his studies of the Ayurveda, Asoka learned the laws of nature and how they are governed by the power of the mind. He knew the laws of heredity and how selective breeding can be used to improve physical characteristics so that the body can be developed into a better and more usuable vehicle for the SELF dwelling within it. He knew too that if a profession is handed down from father to son, each new generation is generally born with increased mental ability and physical skill to perform the work involved.

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* For further information, see Yesudian: 'Yoga and Health'.

Thus, if there is repeated intermarriage among individuals of the same vocational group, it is possible systematically to develop within the group a set of characteristics representing a level of perfection that could not, or only with difficulty, be reached in any other way.

This point can be illustrated by a case taken from European records showing how the human body adapts itself to a profession passed on from one generation to the next. Let us consider Nijinsky, the world-famous Polish dancer. On his father's side, his ancestors had been dancers for five generations. His mother too was a talented, highly trained ballerina who achieved fame in her own right. Nijinsky fulfilled all the requirements for expressing the highest spiritual plane through *physical movement*. His nervous system was able to transmit the profoundest spiritual experiences into every last fibre of his being. And like a willing instrument, his body followed the manifestation of creative force expressed in motion. Not only did his nervous system and his remarkable muscles attain this degree of development, but even his bones were adapted to the exercise of the art he had inherited from his forefathers. Nijinsky was born with a peculiar abnormality in his feet which enabled him to make the most extraordinary leaps. He almost seemed to float through the air. The book written about him by his wife, Romola Pulszky, contains the following comments on the subject:

> 'Dr. Abbé showed me an X-ray photograph and explained the amazing fact that the anatomical structure of Vaslav's feet was not the same as in other human beings and that Vaslav represented a transition between man and bird.
>
> 'How do you explain that, doctor?'
>
> 'Purely hereditary! Five generations of dancing. Not only has he been brought up as a dancer and practised unremittingly, but his forebears lived the same life. That is also the secret of his most remarkable leaps. No wonder he seems to be flying. Nijinsky is a human bird.'
>
> Dr. Abbé asked me to allow him to present the X-ray picture to a medical museum.'

As Asoka and the great rulers who followed him wanted to develop a race of people with the highest possible perfection in all vocations, it gradually became the accepted rule for each new generation to follow the father's occupation and for young people to marry only within the circle of those doing their own type of work. Initially the population was divided into only four classes: 1. higher, mental workers including rulers, priests, physicians and scholars; this class or 'caste', was known as 'Brahmans'; 2. the caste of warriors, called 'Kshatriya'; 3. merchants, or 'Vaisya'; and 4. the workers, or 'Sudra' caste. Little by little these main classes split up into more and more branches until finally there were countless subdivisions. Their real Sanskrit name is 'jaty', but in popular usage they are called castes, and the institution is known as the caste system.

The founders of this system knew that it is basically the same thing whether one concentrates on physical, mental or spiritual work; the important matter is the concentration itself because it expands the consciousness; sooner or later it awakens the individual to spiritual vision so that he will walk the inner path of the soul. This plane can be reached by persons belonging to any caste if they put their heart in their work. Hence the law of the caste system is the same for all castes; an individual who has reached this high plane of spiritual development and, renouncing a worldly life, devotes himself entirely to Yoga, is no longer a member of any caste. Instead, he is above all castes. Whether he was a prince or a labourer, he is henceforth regarded as a man who has begun to walk the sacred path.

In the beginning, people who had exceptional talents could change from one caste to another. As long as this initial idea prevailed and as long as people had the desire to change, the system bore fruit. The historic monuments that have come down through the ages are proof of the tremendous spiritual and mental giants that India once produced. They turned their attention to every subject: psychology, art, literature, science, trade and commerce and other fields of human activity. They went at things quite systematically always going to the root of every problem. As a result, they rose to a very high plane of achievement. In many fields, only monuments and memories of their one-time perfection are left. But their magnificent systems of mental research have, in Yoga, been handed down to us intact and alive. In time, like every idea, the caste system stiffened into a lifeless hulk. Asoka's original plan, so excellent from the standpoint of improving the race, had degenerated into a clumsy dogma. Today the caste system neither fulfils its original purpose nor corresponds to the needs of modern times. The reform of the caste system is now only a matter of a short while. This reform was one of the ideas to which Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Gandhi devoted their lives. If their ideas continue to spread throughout India at the same rate as in the past few decades, this question will soon have solved itself. Modern Indians feel less attached to their castes than was formerly the case. In proportion, as new ideas spread throughout India, the *law* of the caste system will cease to operate. *But the caste system itself will remain, just as it exists all over the* *world!*—only in a less rigid form than in India. I was not a little surprised to discover in Europe—where everybody considered it his most urgent task to call me to account because of India's caste system—that people are every bit as upset, tearful, desperate or full of malicious slander, when someone wants to marry 'beneath his rank'. Wherever there are people, we will always find them all too human. Let us try to understand each other.

For Indians themselves, the caste system is not a heavy yoke as strangers are prone to imagine. An Indian does not believe in accident, and if he is born into a low caste, he knows that, for the further development of his soul, he needs certain experiences which he can only get as a member of this caste. So, for the sake of his spiritual development, he will endeavour to take full advantage of his present situation. Among the lower castes, there is such unspeakable misery that many persons never get a full meal from the time they are born to the day they die. To look at, they are pitiable weaklings, yet they do not rebel against their fate. Gandhi spent a lifetime trying to lift these poor people out of their miserable condition. His followers are continuing the work.

Poverty is the lot of the majority of Indians even in educated circles, although to a lesser degree. Their conception too is clearly reflected in the words of Christ: 'For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his soul?' (Matthew 16; 26). Even though during the short stretch of our lives we may be rich in earthly goods, we cannot take a single thing with us when our time comes. But spiritual treasures—the results of our experiences and spiritual development—remain ours even after death, forever ours. In India everybody, from the poorest and most ignorant all the way up to the highest social classes, strives to attain spiritual values. In contrast to this prime aim in life, the questions of food, shelter and clothing take on an extremely minor importance. It is true, the Indian does everything in his power to live well, and he strives especially hard to provide for his children, but his thoughts are never filled with the mere struggle for material things. God will provide. And He will give us exactly as much as we need for a life that promotes our spiritual development as the most important matter.

Let us consider an Indian who gets all his comfort and strength from following the religious principles he learned from his wise old priest. All his life long, he lives with serene faith, and he dies in the conviction that in his next life he will reach a higher plane. Year in and year out he strives to deserve and attain this higher plane. 'The higher level' towers up before his inner eye like a reward to be earned. In the next life, his present efforts and firm faith will be rewarded; he will be nearer liberation. The things he achieves during his earthly life are much less important. Whether prince or pauper, he knows his present state is only important to the extent to which it brings him nearer to TRUTH, to FREEDOM, to GOD! Both rich and poor can reach the goal. The value of a person's life is not determined by the possessions he acquires, but by the manner in which he performs the work it is his duty to do. *Take the first step towards fate and you will notice that fate comes to meet you. If you are generous, life will be generous with you.* If you are evil, life will be inexorably evil to you and you will suffer. Everything comes back to us! This truth is taught by all the holy scriptures in every religion on earth, for Karma is a natural law that operates with absolute precision. 'All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword,' said Christ Jesus (Matthew 26; 52). This law explains why people are not born with equal conditions in life. The experiences we bring along from our previous existence determine our present physical and spiritual plane. Externals and the rigid rules of religion are necessary for the guidance of the masses. But they do not satisfy those who, in the words of an Indian proverb, prefer to eat the coconuts themselves rather than merely to enjoy the sight of them. As the pearl lies hidden in the depths of the mussel, just so does truth lie hidden in the depths of the human heart. We merely have to know how to find it. Thinking people try to use their intellect to come nearer to truth.

In the streets of Madras there is heavy traffic during the day time. But towards evening, as soon as the noise has subsided and people feel the need of rest, it is a common practice for small pastry shops to be closed and transformed, for a few hours, into places of worship. The sidewalk in front of the shop is swept, mats are spread out for the worshippers, the veranda is decorated with jasmin, palm leaves and fresh garlands of banana branches. In the midst of the group a picture of a great living saint is placed. As they look at it, the worshippers are filled with feelings of kindness, peace, love, and purity. After a short hymn, a Brahman priest steps out upon the little dais at eleven o'clock. He wears a garland of yellow flowers, the symbol of sanctity, as he begins his religious instruction. Generally he reads from a holy book, his voice rising and falling musically as in an incantation, while a little ensemble of stringed and percussion instruments plays a soft accompaniment. These gatherings are often attended by educated men occupying high places in public life. They hear the same words; but behind the stories they see personified forces so that they discover the deep hidden wisdom. Through these sacred legends they thus get closer and closer to the clear essence that is clothed in the stories, until they reach the point where they no longer need the figures of daily events and experiences which hide the meaning. Instead, they hunger and thirst after the undraped, naked truth. They want to see and experience the essence of things—truth itself. Our earthly life, with its manifold pleasures and its many sorrows, is only an opportunity for us to open our eyes to see the reality that lives as a deeper meaning in and behind the things and events we experience. This existence of ours is like a story written for the purpose of helping a child learn something. But the mature person who has his eyes open does not need the story. He wants to come straight to the point without wasting any time on non-essentials. A person who sees the essence of things and wants to devote himself exclusively to truth, no longer needs the experiences of every day living. So it comes about—and in India it is a commonplace thing—that a man takes leave of his wife and family, dons the habit of a wanderer, and leaves home to live as a hermit, or to become the disciple of a Yogi, so that he can devote his life to his higher goal. The Indian considers this life on earth as a duty which holds us in bondage until we have faithfully acquitted ourselves of our obligations. To be sure, life offers us joys and pleasures, but all our fun and fame are short-lived, and we should not consider them as too important. The Indian feels that his earthly life is a kind of slavery. His OVERSELF is a prisoner like a bird in a cage. This world is a dungeon in which man performs as well as he can all the tasks life assigns him. But as soon as he fulfills his obligation, he is entitled to the freedom for which he has been thirsting all his life long.

If we were to believe that Indians who leave their families for a hermit's life do so because of a lack of harmony and that their desire for a life of the spirit is only a pretext to enable them to escape from an unhappy family life—we would be judging the situation quite falsely. The opposite is the case. The more we love someone personally and the greater our pleasure in living with him, the greater our bondage—because our feelings bind us to him. After the body has been cast off, our desires draw us down to earth again—back to finite form—and we cannot reach infinity. But Indians cherish freedom—the freedom of the soul—above everything else.

In India where people's basic nature is patience, the great majority of marriages are harmonious. But the fact that most married couples live peaceably and happily is not only due to the conciliatory nature of Indians generally, but primarily to the fact that Indian marriages are not based on material goods and externals, but on mental and spiritual compatibility of the husband and wife. This inner spiritual constellation shows up in the horoscope prepared for each new-born baby by reputable and experienced astrologers wise in the ways of India's ancient sciences.

Parents regard their children's education and preparation for life as their most sacred duty. The child is looked upon as the greatest gift God can bestow upon its parents. In the eyes of the Indians, the child is a message from God showing his love for them. The little one must be carefully led until it is able to stand on its own feet and understand the meaning of life. As a guide in this great responsibility, the child's constellation at birth is a signpost at every important crossroads from childhood through youth to marriage. In India astrology is a science based on several thousand years of observation. It is handed down from father to son and is so highly developed that it offers a secure guide for education, choice of vocation, and choice of a partner in marriage. Husband and wife are selected for each other on the basis of spiritual compatibility. This explains the astonishingly high degree of harmony existing between them despite the fact that they ordinarily do not get acquainted with each other until after they are married. Both husband and wife are firmly convinced that each was destined by God for the other; both strive to thank God for the joys of married life, while they bear difficulties and reverses jointly, each doing what he can to ease the burden. From earliest childhood both partners in marriage have been raised in the conviction that faithful fulfilment of duty brings liberation. This faith gives them the strength to go through even the hardest trials without grumbling, with peace in their hearts. 'It's all a school,' says the Indian, while he does his very best to be worthy of promotion to the next class.

My father's best friend was a judge of high standing in southern India. He was known for miles around for his magnanimity and love of truth. He was the founder and director of numerous welfare institutions. Although he had a substantial income and a great fortune, he led a simple, modest and happy life with his family. The door of his big house was always open for the poor, and he was much praised and blessed for his goodheartedness. He was a frequent guest of my father who was not only his friend but also his family doctor. When he was at the peak of a successful career, he resigned from his office, settled a huge sum on his family, and left home with empty pockets, to seek the inner path of the soul. He put away his English-cut occidental clothes, exchanging them for the rags of a mendicant. He took leave of my father with the following words: 'God bless you, my friend. I have done my duty here on earth as an honourable member of human society. Now I am going to seek the bread of LIFE.' Turning his back on all the delusions of earthly joys and physical pleasures, he said good-bye to his dearly beloved family and set out on the inner pathway of the soul in search of TRUTH. The world's illusions could satisfy him no longer; for they are temporal and mortal. He longed for the infinite, the immortal, the eternal. He had planted the seeds which God had given him; he had garnered the harvest for those he loved. Then he went through the gate to freedom.

Such an act causes no surprise to people in India. The family left behind does not feel deserted. The wife and children do not cry for their dearly beloved husband and father. They know that only his earthly envelope has gone away. His spirit remains in indissoluble union with those he loved.

Let no one think that this way of looking at things makes the Indians unfeeling or indifferent. Quite the contrary! The Indian, however, does not attach his feelings to externals, to the body, but to the spirit that animates the body. He knows that earthly love is merely a longing for spiritual unity, union with one's divine SELF.

In the Indian legend, Yajnavalkya taught his wife Maitreyi:

> 'It is not for the sake of the husband that the wife loves the husband, but for the sake of the Atman that she loves the husband, because she loves the Self. No one loves the wife for the sake of the wife, but it is because he loves the Self that he loves the wife. No one loves children for the children's sake, but because one loves the Self, therefore one loves the children. No one loves wealth for the sake of wealth, but because one loves the Self, therefore one loves wealth. No one loves Brahmana for Brahmana's sake, but because one loves the Self, therefore one loves Brahmana. And so no one loves Kshatria for Kshatria's sake, but because one loves the Self. And so too, no one loves the world for the world's sake, but because one loves the Self. No one loves the gods for the gods' sake, but because one loves the Self. No one loves a thing for that thing's sake, but it is for the Self that one loves it. This Self, therefore, is to be heard, reasoned about and meditated upon. O my Maitreyi, when that Self has been heard, when that Self has been seen, when that Self has been *realized*, you know all this.'

In order to reach this goal, the body is more of a hindrance than a help. Physical separation—even death—is no real separation at all; for those who have been spiritually united on the earth are not influenced by distance or by the mere shedding of their body. Spiritual bonds are higher and stronger than space and time. In the eyes of the occidental, one might be inclined to believe that the Indian does not feel so strongly attached to his loved ones because he does not cry so desperately when he 'loses' them. The Indian too would cry for his loved ones if he lost them, but *he has no sensation of losing them!* In his mind and soul the bond remains, and he feels at one with those he has loved. He has no reason to cry! Death, distance and time mean very little in India.

Let us now try to follow such a wanderer. Let us see how he sets out to find TRUTH. Wearing only a loin-cloth and sandals, and carrying only a walking stick, he goes forth determined to accept any form of privation. Leaving behind him the firm footing and protection of his accustomed way of living, he boldly strikes out into the empty nothingness of the great unknown in order to prove his mastery over space and time. His goal is consciously to overcome the world of the body and to learn to use the forces that govern the universe. Wandering from one village to another, he stops on the steps of temples to rest with other seekers after truth. He learns from spiritual leaders and gathers experiences. The more intellectual among such wanderers study India's ancient sacred books, the Vedas, Upanishads and Sutras. In the stillness of the forest he meets hermits—Sadhus and Sanyasins—as they are called in India. They too have left earthly joys, riches and wealth in exchange for the eternal. From these wise men he learns the mysteries of silence and solitude. Deeper and deeper he penetrates into untouched nature. He wanders through the mountains of southern India, to wonderful Nilagari—the Blue Mountain—and Kodaykanal—the 'Umbrella Mountain'—scarcely a few hundred miles away from Madras, yet covered with virgin forest and inhabited by wild animals. Well-to-do people come up to these hills to avoid the heat of the dry season. They find the climate much more agreeable here than the tropical heat of the plains. But far beyond these summer homes, up in the highlands where there are no more settlements, the pilgrim wanders, looking for his master. He has left his family and friends, perhaps after receiving a telepathic communication from a great master, a Yogi, telling him that the time has come when he can begin to learn and find the things for which his soul has been thirsting. Such a telepathic message is not a figment of the imagination. It is a fact based on natural laws, just like wireless telegraphy and radio. Human thoughts have their transmitters and receivers all over the world. When, in our meditating, we reach the wave-length of a great master, we are in contact with him. People of great spirituality—spiritual leaders, Sadhus, Sanyasins, Yogis, Gurus, Rishis and Maharishis radiate pure thoughts whose high frequency make them extraordinarily strong and penetrating. From their mountain hermitage they send out their call to those who have matured spiritually and are ready for the meaning of life. My father's friend, recognizing the call of an inner voice, set out to obey it. His master received him lovingly, with open arms, like a new member of the family, and soon his initiation began.

Such a settlement where a number of pupils live with their master is called an ashram. It's food supply consists of gifts brought by pilgrims from nearby villages: fruit, rice, coconuts and milk, supplemented by the food the master knows how to find in the forest: roots, herbs, mushrooms and wild honey. Worldly comforts are unknown here. The master and his pupils are never sick and have no longing for the pleasure of civilization they have left behind. It may seem strange, but it is nonetheless true that the greatest civilization and spiritual culture is the one in which they are living. For these people, the return to a worldly way of living would be retrogression, not progress.

The whole environment is holy and sanctified. A hypnotic radiation of high spirituality keeps away trespassers and those who would wantonly destroy animal life. Endowed with highly developed sensitivity, these Yogis can feel, even miles away, when people are approaching their ashram. This primitive instinct is highly perfected through constant practice. Among animals this is an old story. Monkeys can sense the approach of a snake over an unbelievable distance. Thirsty animals sense the presence of water several miles away and run headlong up hill, down dale, to quench their thirst. Yogis too have such well developed sensitivity that they 'know' when someone is approaching, and they know whether the visit is desirable or not. If not, they send out a hypnotic radiation so that the approaching person misses the path, or else imagines a high cliff to be standing across the way. The trespasser has not the faintest inkling that the cliff is a camouflage *existing only in his imagination*. But the ashram preserves its peace and pure atmosphere in this way.

Here in the forest, man and animal live in perfect harmony, and the laws of the jungle are strictly followed by all. The new disciple first learns the language of the animals. He masters the language of snakes, tigers, leopards, cheetahs and other animals. Then he learns the magic incantations—mantrams—and how to control the mental forces that can make even the wildest animals tame and obedient. This protects him from being torn to shreds as a result of ignorance. Every foot of soil, every blade of grass, every plant, every bit of nature is alive in the mind of these peaceable people. They feel themselves at one with the whole universe!

Other lessons, too, the new pupil can learn from nature. If we watch a praying mantis, we see it clinging to a twig or a leaf, so perfectly still that it looks like a blade of grass itself. Hour after hour it remains motionless, yet perfectly watchful of the approach of its prey. So, too, one of the first tasks of the new disciple is to learn quiet and rest—sacred silence—from his guru. Nature sets the example. With the same motionless watchfulness of the praying mantis—just as still, yet just as watchful—he must learn to sit and watch his prey: himself! Only when perfectly relaxed can we concentrate perfectly. So the first task is to learn perfect self control.

Let us now imagine the situation of one of the new pupils who has just left behind him his family and the activity of civilized life, its haste and confusion. When he now sits down to concentrate on rest, thousands and thousands of memories swarm into his consciousness and leave him no peace. With the expansion of his consciousness, this situation not only does not improve; on the contrary it even gets worse. *For the more the consciousness expands, the more subconscious impressions crowd into the conscious mind. In fact, all his memories since birth—things he has long since forgotten and buried—come alive and storm him with such force that he feels he is really experiencing them all again.* This is a difficult stage. The new disciple must come to terms with all his memories, process and digest all his impressions in order not to feel his past life as a chain of *personal* *experiences*. All the events of his life, whether good or bad, must be clarified and crystallized into EXPERIENCE. Whenever he looks back upon them, the turning points in his life must appear to him as opportunities to learn a lesson. He must recognize the causes and forces behind the individual experiences that led him nearer and nearer to the goal. These causes and forces developed his power of discernment and awakened a longing within him to shake off his bonds and attain liberation in the Eternal, in GOD.

When, during this stage of mental and spiritual digestion, he has advanced to the point where he *considers each memory only as an opportunity to obtain experience*—just as if the thing had happened to some one else—then he is no longer bound by these memories because their relationship to his person has ceased to exist. The memories have been detached from his consciousness. He has digested and *transformed* them. They no longer disturb him. At this point the Yoga disciple must learn something very important: the difference between *repression* and *transformation* of feelings, wishes, passions or other memories. As long as we *want to forget* something, it will continue to rankle within us. Whether we realize it or not, such repressed feelings will influence us. They will guide our steps and our acts; they may cause illnesses and persecute us in countless other ways. If, on the other hand we cease to repress them—if we dig them up out of our subconscious, look them in the eye, digest them, i.e., *transform* them, then their power over us is gone. We gain the upper hand, we tame these wild forces that have tortured us in the past, we guide them into the right channels and use them for good. Then we have learned the great truth: *there are no bad forces, only badly used forces*.

Thus the new Yoga disciple attains inner peace. Through the sovereign, sacred peace of nature all around him, he comes into perfect equilibrium. He begins to understand the language of the mountains, brooks, trees, flowers, and animals. Not only does he understand this new language, but he even learns to *speak* it. Little by little he comes to resemble his new companions —those who are already living in inner peace. His tired, storm-driven spirit finds peace; he is refreshed, revitalized, re-energized.

Now he can begin to concentrate on the energy centres, called chakras in Sanskrit. Step by step he conquers them by means of the consciousness, i.e., through conscious will. The hidden energy centres dwelling in the spiritual body of the individual are the chakras located in the nerve centres of the body.* As long as a chakra is not in an active condition, the corresponding nerve centre is not in use. To the extent to which we bring a chakra under the control of our consciousness, we activate, step by step, its nerve centre and begin to put it to work. This process can be compared to a fine motor car that stands ready to go. As long as the driver is not in his seat, the car—even though equipped with every device necessary for perfect operation—remains motionless. The driver is asleep. He must be awakened so that he can take his place in the car and do his work. The driver is the chakra, the psychic centre; the motor car is the seat of the chakra in the body,—the nerve centre. At the present stage of human development, most chakras are in a latent, dormant state, especially those which bring spiritual powers into play. Consequently, the nerve centres with which they are connected, are not in use. To some extent, the most recent research of occidental medical science has brought to light these nerve centres that are ready to function but not in use. But occidental scientists have not yet found out what these nerve centres are for and how they can be activated. The Yoga disciple awakens these chakras by means of special exercises and learns to subject them to his will. In this way the nerve centres connected with them begin to function. Parallel to the pupil's progress, he develops inner sight and inner hearing, and various other latent psychic characteristics begin to come into active use. But all these developments are merely incidental, not the main goal. The important thing is to expand the consciousness. The disciple learns to be master of all his thoughts, all his feelings, every movement. He has learned what causes them and how to control them from the roots up. He gets acquainted with the forces that animate his body, and as he controls them, he masters nature as well. The forces at work within man are the same as those in nature round about. Those who can guide these forces within themselves, those who have found the key, also know how to handle the same forces outside themselves. These are creative forces that come from GOD. In proportion, as man's consciousness approaches GOD, man becomes master of the creative principle. This is possible for every one, although for most people it may seem unattainable because, as a general rule, they wantonly squander the creative forces manifested within them. There are enough instances all about us of how people with psychic powers are able to bring masses of people, entire countries, and even continents under their power. But as a rule they have not systematically and thoroughly learned how to use these forces as Yogis do; on the contrary, they merely make use, often unconsciously, of a faculty with which they were born. Occidental neurologists utilize part of these occult forces under the name of hypnotism. But they do not know the *source* of hypnotic forces and are scarcely acquainted with their laws. The nerve centre that stores this power they generally use unconsciously. In the Occident, hypnotism was discovered by accident. It was not the result of conscious and systematic training such as that given to Yogis in India and Tibet. In these countries, Yoga disciples are initiated step by step into the science of spiritual powers. Another characteristic of Yogis is that they *never strive for worldly power*. They know that happiness is TRUTH and that *truth is not of this world.*

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* For further details, see Yesudian-Haich: 'Yoga and Health'.

But Yogis are not resigned. Those who believe that a Yogi must deny himself everything are quite in error. On the contrary, Yogis want much more than worldly people do. They want EVERYTHING: LIFE itself, IMMORTALITY—perfect, everlasting HAPPINESS! Worldly power, pleasures of the senses, gratification of the physical appetites—all these are ephemeral, without duration, a mirage, a dream from which, sooner or later we awaken. Our spirit which longs for the infinite and immortal can only be satisfied with the ETERNAL.

In all ages and places Yoga remains the same. But those who live Yoga and have reached the goal can now be found in considerable numbers only in India, Tibet and China. To be sure there are Yogis living in all parts of the world. But they are scattered individuals, whereas holy men can be found all over

India—in heavily populated Benares as well as in the uninhabited forests of Chitoor, in Arunachala, in Tiruvannamalay, in Tanjor, in Trichinapoly, and in the vast regions of the nearly inaccessible Himalayas.

Like my father's friend, there always have been, are, and always will be other seekers after truth, both in India and elsewhere in the world. After recognizing an inner voice, these seekers arise, leave home, and set out to follow the call. After long and diligent practice, they too become Yogis, and after they reach the goal of their spiritual path, they place themselves in the service of the community, guiding and teaching those who follow them.

There always have been and always will be those who seek out a great master, not because of a spiritual need, but because they want to acquire occult powers and then return to the world of men, there to use their new knowledge to obtain worldly power. In their initiation, however, they experience spiritual joys and happiness far greater than the fleeting pleasures that money and material power could bring. And after an experience like this they would no longer think of going back among people and abusing the gift of their psychic powers. Those who have come into the possession of the greatest, the only true, immortal happiness—*those who have become happiness themselves*—do not need to run after illusions.

Ramakrishna, the great Indian saint, tells the story of a doll made of salt. 'One day the little doll wanted to measure the depth of the ocean so she could tell others about it. But the very moment she stepped into the water, she melted away. So what was left of her to return to the world and tell how deep the ocean was?'

So too, Milareppa became the greatest saint of Tibet, although he originally went to his master so that, with the help of occult powers, he could wreak terrible vengeance upon his enemy. The result was, however, that as he progressed on the mystic path he became filled with complete understanding of people and then with universal love for them. He stripped off his personal nature and used his far-famed magic powers only for good—only to relieve suffering.

Far up in the Himalayas and other mountain ranges—covered with primeval forests, gigantic and impenetrable, where ordinary mortals seldom set foot—is the most suitable location for a school that teaches the shortest path to God. For ordinary folk such heights are not a favourable resting place. Snow and ice are eternal guardians of these peaceful regions. Then too, there is the radiating power of the Yogis against trespassers and unwanted visitors. But those who have conquered themselves find their true home in these highlands. Living here according to the rules of Yoga, they practise meditation diligently and patiently until the great day when they overcome the boundaries of their human consciousness, when they attain the bliss of rising into infinity—the samadhi state of being. From mortals they have turned into immortals, serving the world in the sacred name of LOVE, WISDOM and TRUTH.

It takes years of work to reach this goal. Often a single lifetime is too short to raise a little human consciousness to the level of immortality. But in the eyes of people of a superior order, time is no factor. They know that *on the path of Yoga not a single step is made in vain*. What we cannot accomplish in this life, we attain in the next, provided of course that we do everything we can to merit divine grace.

To reach the final goal and achieve divine consciousness and experience the condition of samadhi, everyone must travel the path alone. He must take each step himself, on his own power, up the steep and narrow path. Oriental people, by virtue of their special spiritual background, have to travel this path. Their native characteristics of reserve, self-reliance and introversion, together with their capacity for concentration, predestine them —after thorough self-education—to penetrate the secrets of the SELF and conquer the conscious and unconscious world. Through union with the universal, divine SELF they achieve union with the whole living world. Once they attain the experience of universal love, they dedicate their lives to SERVICE. But this is no longer a path; this is a SACRIFICE. The oriental travels the path alone. Only when he reaches the end of the path, does he expand into communion with others.

THE PATH OF THE ORIENT IS THE
INDIVIDUAL PATH!

III

The Path of the Occident

'Thou shalt love thy
neighbour as thyself.'
Matthew 22; 39

The path of the occidental is that of experiencing and practising brotherly love. The path of the Occident is a collective one.

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'. . . For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them' (Matthew 18; 20). With these words Mr. Oakley, an outstanding Englishman, closed his sermon in a Sunday service. Now I understood for the first time the overpowering thought underlying the Christian community—Christian unity.

At these evening meetings, the audience was composed of all races and castes of Indians. Brahmans, Mohammedans, Christians, Hindus, Anglo-Indians and Europeans met here every Sunday. A different person led the service each time. The leader was one of the members who felt that the conviction of faith urged him to talk to the others.

These meetings were a blessing for many of us, and many were spellbound with emotion as they listened. They did not follow the sermon with critical attention. Their counter-arguments vanished as they became acquainted with the spirit of Jesus Christ. Such tremendous power dwells in the divine words of brotherly love!

When I went home that night, Mr. Oakley's quotation from the Bible burned within me. I sat in judgement over my past, and my heart was filled with love and gratitude for the deeply religious upbringing my dearly beloved parents had given us children. Mr. Oakley, President of our Boy Scout Association, was also a strongly religious man, and the things he had said a few days before echoed in my heart: 'Boys, dedicate yourselves entirely to universal love and follow Christ. Do not tire of saying his name. He died for love. The only way we can express our thanks is to give him our heart. Believe in him, for he is love itself. Work for him in his name.'

The unity of brotherly love taught in Christianity cast light into the souls of many Indians. Even Gandhi always carried a Bible and on many occasions, he quoted it and taught from it. On this memorable evening, I saw with spiritual eyes the path of the Occident in its truth and purity! Many young Indians decided to devote their lives to universal love. This beautiful hymn became their creed:

Just as I am just, young and free,
To be the best that I can be.
For truth and righteousness and Thee,
Lord of my life I come, I come.

The year 1937 brought a great change for me. I left my native land and came to Europe to get acquainted with occidental methods of physical culture and training. As I stood on the deck of the steamer and watched the stormy waves of the Arabian Sea, I surveyed my fate. With heart beating high, I reflected that I was approaching the real home of Christianity where I would be living among millions of people filled with true brotherly love for each other. Christian world! What an inspirition it will be, I mused, to live among people who have been educated in nearly two thousand years of Christian teaching, people who recognize Christ as their leader. How beautiful to enter a world where everyone lives in the spirit of Christ and all are united in brotherly love in one great family. Are all Europeans Christians? If Europe was able to bring Christ to India, how great must be Europe's own blessing of faith . . . Thus I dreamed, full of blissful hopes, and my ship brought me nearer and nearer to Europe . . .

A great world exhibition took place in Paris that year. On my way to London, I got my first impression of Europe while visiting Paris. How great is the Almighty, I thought, if even through puny man, He can manifest Himself so wonderfully. The Eiffel Tower and the exhibition, with its pavilions, fountains and manifold wonders, were masterpieces of art and engineering. From Paris I travelled on to London and then back to the Continent. I visited the larger cities in various countries, spent twelve years in Budapest, and then came to Switzerland. Wherever I went I found friends and made acquaintances. I had the chance to talk about all the important things in life and to get thoroughly acquainted with European's Christianity. . . .

To my great joy I *did* find some people who knew and believed in the *same* Christ I had learned about 8,000 miles away. I found people who really knew the inner meaning of Christian teachings and *practised it in their lives*. On the other hand, as every one of my readers has probably realized, I must confess that in Europe, the home of Christian love, I did not as a general rule, find the Christianity I had dreamt about. Although otherwise I liked Europe in many ways, the impression I received of European religious life proved disappointing. This disappointment caused me to make a thorough study of occidental religious history. After this study I understood that the present situation in Europe is the logical consequence of the course of past events and that this natural development has prepared Europe for the great spiritual renaissance that is now beginning.

The stranger arriving in Europe notices how many 'seekers' there are here. Regardless of age, sex and social class, the human spirit is thirsting for the water of life, without knowing where and in what this water of life is to be found, and—in most cases—without even being vaguely conscious of its own thirst. People are merely restless, in search of something, and do not themselves know what. They long to find some meaning and content in life! The catastrophic visitations of our present day are making people think. The foundations on which they have built their lives have been shaken. The value of money and possessions has become unstable. Every day more and more people recognize the complete failure of materialism and begin to search for the inner causes. Spirit is again gaining the upper hand over matter. As he did to Nicodemus, Christ will give seekers their answer: 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God . . . Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again' (John 3; 5, 7). And when they are reborn: 'Follow me . . .'

If we look at Europe's history and recognize the spiritual tides that have risen and ebbed away, we can understand that everything happens according to a divine plan. If we let the last 2,000 years unroll before us like a cinema film, we can make out the broad lines of development, the trends by which the millions of people in the Occident have reached their present state. The past sowed the seed for the present, and the present lays the cornerstone for the future. Europe stands at a crossroads and the vanes of its windmill are being turned briskly by the storms of the times.

It is unnecessary to recount the historical events that have led up to the present. As they are common knowledge, they are of interest only from the point of view of the effects they have had on the development of the European mind.

Let us begin by casting a backward glance at the greatest and most important event; one that has had a decisive influence on the development of history and religion . . . and will continue so to influence the future. This event, which destroyed the world of a classic antiquity, was the birth of Christ.

Jesus' teachings ushered in a completely new epoch. The new ideas transformed the face of the ancient world and fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament. The first disciples were simple, modest people, but their faith was unshakable. As a result of the power they gained through initiation into the Christ SELF, they changed the appearance of the western world.

At that time Europe was under the rule of Imperial Rome. The suppressed tribes and races, along with millions of slaves, thirsted, in their unspeakable misery, for freedom and spiritual consolation. These hungering and thirsting masses were the first to take up the bread and water of life offered them by the early Christians, and they did so eagerly. Some of them became helpers in the mighty work wrought in the name of God. Their souls were satisfied, as they gained solace and hope in the teaching that, in exchange for earthly trials and tribulations, they were promised a better, happier life in the next world.

The disciples scattered in all directions. Some remained in the Holy Land or travelled to other parts of Asia. But the teaching activity of this group was weak in effect and soon ceased. The teachings of the Apostles Peter and Paul got their roots down deepest. They came to Europe and initiated thousands of people into the faith. In the Roman Empire, more and more were baptised, and those who were filled with the Holy Ghost, proclaimed the Word themselves; for many there were who hungered and thirsted after truth. The miracles and signs wrought by the Apostles convinced the masses, and the fire of Christianity spread in all directions. There sprang up groups of persons living together in ideal harmony. They had joint funds and held property in common. Nobody had possessions of his own; everything belonged to the community. Each did the work for which he was best suited, receiving what he needed in return. The divine Word spread with tremendous power and great was the harvest!

The Apostles initiated the first Christians 'in Christo'—into the higher SELF. The Apostles knew the truth. They knew that Christ is not to be found without but within, and they found HIM in the SELF in TRUTH, in LIFE. They knew what Jesus meant when he said 'That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us' (John 17; 21). They knew the meaning of the immortality Jesus promised: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life' (John 6; 47). They knew because with their consciousness they lived in the divine Christ SELF. They had no fear of persecution and physical death, for they knew that there is no death—only eternal life. Without flinching they let themselves be dragged into the arena to be torn to shreds by wild beasts. The higher SELF gave them strength to bear all their tortures. This unshakable faith and the love and harmony among the first Christinas gave Christianity the magic power it has kept throughout the centuries. Against such unity and such faith there is no defence and no weapon; for unity and faith work unseen, penetrating the human heart, and conquering time

State Museum Library, Lucknow

and space. The blood shed by these first Christians is the invincible power; for the magic of sacrifice and love is immortal like eternal life itself.

Roman officials, high ranking officers and all those who came in contact with the Christians during their persecutions were deeply affected by their unswerving faith and their disregard for pain and death. These Romans could not help being influenced. Naturally they were curious to know what there was about this new religion that made people care so much for it that they allowed themselves to be put to death for their faith. They caused Christians—now and then perhaps an apostle—to be brought to them secretly so they could find out about Christianity and Jesus Christ, the 'King of Kings'. The power of the Word and the blood of the martyrs did their work. High officers and their families embraced the faith and joined the masses who went to their death singing psalms and hymns in the name of Christ.

History tells us how Christianity spread upward, step by step, from the poorest and lowest classes up to the richest and most powerful. Finally, after several hundred years, the persecutions ceased. Constantine the Great permitted the Christians to practise their faith unmolested and began to study Christian teachings himself. He saw their beauty and made Christianity the state religion. He even helped to organize the church. Three hundred years had passed since the birth of Christ. During this time the new faith had gone through many heads and hearts. And many there were who failed to grasp the true meaning of Christ's teaching and began to interpret it in various ways. Constantine convoked a Council in Nicea and unified the articles of faith. On his deathbed he became a Christian and hence the first Christian ruler.

The persecution ceased and every Roman citizen enjoyed full religious freedom. The blood the martyrs had shed for Christ became the rock on which the church was built. The power rooted in the unity and brotherhood of the first Christian communities gradually grew into a mighty force in the life of the world.

But time does not stand still. A tree loses its blossom in order to prepare for the fruit to come. And Christianity too, after spreading the religion in its freedom and strength, began to lose the original idea in order to bring forth its fruit: the new Jerusalem—life based on Christian ideas—the life of Christian love!

Mass conversions to the new faith undermined the unity of the first Christian communities. The rules of joint ownership were relaxed. As long as baptism in the new religion meant constant persecution, torture and death, *the only people who embraced Christianity were those who possessed an unflinching fanatical faith based on their own spiritual experience*. For those who were willing to sacrifice their lives for Christ at any time, it was no sacrifice at all to lead a simple life and give up worldly possession in favour of communal ownership. 'He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it' (Matthew 10; 39). They kept this promise before them and sacrificed their personal life for the heavenly joys of living in Christ. But when Christianity became the state religion, thousands became Christians who were not really ready to permeate their daily living with willingness to make sacrifices. They were not ready to give up their personal lives because they were not able to raise themselves up to the Christ SELF—the Overself. Thus it came about that they accepted Christianity in theory but continued to live their heathen lives of worldly, sensual pleasure. Then too, there were many who, without understanding the greatness of Christian ideas, were baptised only to gain favour in the church, to gain the latter's support, to enjoy security under the wings of its growing strength and to satisfy their own hunger for power. As a matter of fact, among the Christians taken into the church in mass baptisms, there were very many who were not true Christians at all. The church was forced to compromise and relax a great many of the early Christians' strict rules of puritanical modesty and communal life.

In the course of time these simple, modest Christian communities disappeared entirely. Those who longed for this mode of life gradually withdrew from the world and gathered about a spiritual leader; men about a chosen man, women about a woman. That was the beginning of religious orders. Among the first to found an order was St. Benedict who established twelve monasteries about the year 500 A.D.

Benedict was followed by a number of great saints who devoted their lives to God in the spirit of Christ. Many of them founded orders or wrote monumental works of spiritual edification such as books of meditations or exercises, thus preserving the idea of *true* Christianity. There was St. Dominic; St. Francis of Assisi; John of the Cross, one of the greatest mystics; St. Anthony, the great teacher of the church; St. Augustine; the 'great' St. Theresa and many other saints who lived in Christ.

As the centuries rolled past, the church grew into a great power recognized and reverenced by European rulers. Those who resisted the church had, sooner or later, to yield. Henry the Fourth was a mighty potentate. But as a result of his conflict with the Pope he was forced to go barefoot, garbed in haircloth garments to Canossa, the residence of Pope Gregory VII, in order to beg forgiveness for his insubordination. That was the origin of the expression 'journey to Canossa'.

In the eleventh century, Pope Urban II proclaimed the crusade. All Europe was excited about this idea, and for a time the general enthusiasm overshadowed the conflicts within Europe.

The history of the crusades is well known in Europe. They lasted until the beginning of the thirteenth century, and ended in disappointment. In considering a scientific development, we disregard details and try to consider everything from the standpoint of the whole, we have to admit that some elements of a process, though seemingly harmful, are necessary for the overall development and the desired result. The crusades brought the occidental world something people of that period did not even suspect.

Europe wearied of the crusades and this helped further to alter the ratio of real Christians to those who were followers of Christ in name only. The great masses of people never understood Christ's teaching. However much they liked the promise of immortality and the kingdom of God, their disappointment was equally great when the promise 'He that believeth on me hath everlasting life' (John 6; 47) was not fulfilled literally. Those who have not progressed very far spiritually always take immortality to refer to the body instead of their SELF. But Jesus tells us: 'Behold, the kingdom of God is *within you*' (Luke 17; 21). Nevertheless people sought—and still seek—the promised kingdom of God *outside* instead of *within their own spirit*. Thinking in terms of earthly experience, they project the idea of heavenly joy into space, for they do not understand that heaven is *not a place but a state of mind*. The spiritually undeveloped masses were unable to draw strength from the immaterial teachings of Jesus, because the spiritual plane—the kingdom of Christ—was unapproachable for them—and always will be. Christ's call: 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11; 28) touched everyone's heart. But regardless of how beautiful it sounded, this call was without effect, because people did not know *where* they could find Christ to go to him. They did not—and still do not know that Christ can be found only within themselves. The Apostle Paul says very clearly: 'Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you?' (II Corinthians 13; 5). People sought help from outside when they were in difficulties. They felt that GOD and Christ were far, unattainably far above them. So they went to soothsayers who gave them potions and witches' salves and drove away their troubles with magic. Spiritually under-developed people always want to see 'signs and miracles'. They want to see the help of higher powers in tangible form.

When we look through old chronicles and records, we are surprised at how often the fear of the last judgement has arisen in the Occident. People only needed to see an odd-shaped cloud to imagine that the world was coming to an end. Again and again they frightened each other, doing great harm to their faith. Some of the faithful gathered in churches to pray, while others lapsed into orgies of drinking and revelry, forgetting their work, in order to have 'one last fling' as long as they were still alive. But the last judgement did not come. Those of little faith were disappointed and stopped praying. The revellers too, were disappointed when they had to leave their pleasures and go to work again. In both of these groups religious faith was weakened. —Everyday living deviated farther and farther from Christian truths, while superstition and black magic spread. Diaries, letters and records of this period prove that the practices of black magic were widely known. Benvenuto Cellini's autobiography, for example, contains a detailed description of the most gruesome conjuration of spirits. His hair-raising story makes fascinating reading.

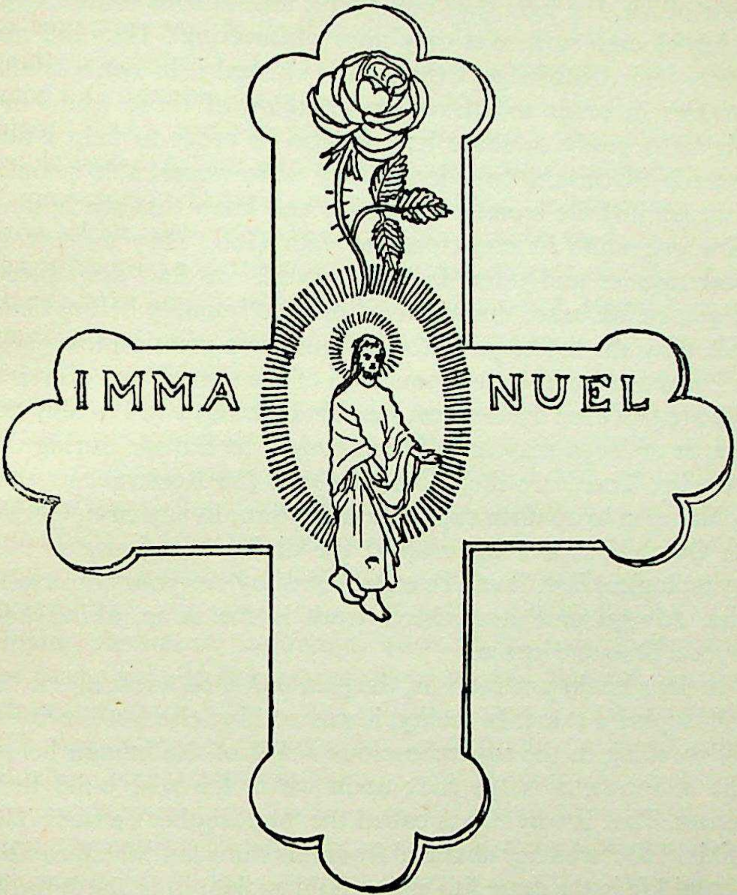
One dark night a magician took Cellini, two friends, and a twelve-year-old boy—according to the rules, an innocent child had to be present—into the Colosseum in Rome. There the magician donned the prescribed clothing and, accompanied by various ceremonies, drew a circle on the ground. Then he drew an opening and through this he led his companions into the circle. In the middle of the circle he made a fire, and the group squatted down to perform their various duties. While the sorcerer read magic words from books he had brought along, Cellini and his friends had to fan the fire and throw in a special kind of incense. The latter had a double purpose. It was supposed to keep evil spirits outside the circle and at the same time enable those who inhaled it to see the spirits with their own eyes. When all preparations were completed, the sorcerer, uttering fearful curses and imprecations, commanded the devils to do his bidding. The conjuration succeeded only too well. Whole legions of devils appeared—in such numbers that the entire Colosseum was filled with them. The place was overrun with devilish monsters, roaring, shrieking, jostling each other, and trying to get into the circle in order to reach the conjurers. The latter—all of them, including the sorcerer himself—were seized by such overpowering fright that they shook like quaking asps, their teeth chattered, one of them was paralyzed, and the magician stuttered and stammered as he uttered his incantations. With his head pressed between his knees, the boy howled with fright, screaming that he was going to die, so terryifying was the sight of the monsters milling about them.

Cellini, too, was shaking from head to foot. Yet he was able to grin savagely at his friends' fright, and he encouraged the others, especially the boy, to pull themselves together and dispel their fears. The magician also tried to get a grip on himself. Quaking and stammering, he gave orders to the devils who would be obliged to obey unless they succeeded in getting into the circle before the first stroke of a bell. Slowly the night of horror passed and dawn broke over the terrified group. Little by little the devils withdrew, and at the first ringing of a bell, there were only a few of them still creeping about the columns of the Colosseum. Half dead from fright, the conjurers prepared to depart. The sorcerer changed back into his everyday clothing and picked up his books. Clinging to one another, the companions stepped out of the circle, each trying to keep in the middle and surround himself by the others. The boy huddled between them, holding fast to Cellini's coat and the sorcerer's vest. All the way home he complained that two devils with horrible, misshapen bodies were following them. Since it was already sunrise and the devils therefore were unable to attack, they kept running on ahead of the group—now hopping along housetops and again turning handsprings in the street. That was the end of the conjuration. Cellini's wish to see devils was fulfilled. In this one seance he had seen enough to last the rest of his life.

The Middle Ages are known as the Dark Ages because witchcraft, superstition and the black arts were in full bloom. During this same period, however, there were great men with pure souls who raised their consciousness up to the level of Christ. But here too, the pure sublime mysticism of a higher order of men was debased by the ignorant masses and distorted into dark mystification. Out of the secret knowledge of the initiated, the uninitiated made superstition and witchcraft. The state of holy extasy which Yogis call 'samadhi' was achieved by the mystics through persistent spiritual exercises and prayers. Spiritually under-developed individuals endeavoured to attain this state through witches' potions and various drugs and poisons.

From the thirteenth century onwards we find ever more numerous traces of a group of unusual people united in a secret society. The knowledge they had obtained from their master was passed on—in great secrecy—to one of their tried and trusted disciples. They called themselves Rosicrucians, for their secret sign was a cross and a rose in flower. In the middle of the cross stood the figure of Christ—the divine Self.

Traces of the Rosicrucians can be found all over Europe. Most of them lived in Germany, France and England. They were surrounded by secrecy, and no one knew anything definite about them. Even today, however, there are many documents which prove that they existed in secret societies and that they had amazing knowledge. They studied all branches of science, and the experimental furnaces in their alchemists' kitchens burned day and night. Ordinary people feared and avoided these alchemists' kitchens, believing the Rosicrucians to be witch doctors.



The beginnings of our present-day science of chemistry reach back to these men who studied the secrets of matter. The great initiated alchemists were all Rosicrucians.

Chronicles tell us that they could transmute base metals into gold and knew the secret of the philosopher's stone, the elixir of life, the light that never fails, and various other things which modern science is only now 'discovering'. They did not betray their knowledge. Instead they clothed it in symbols and parables in order to attract the attention of those who were spiritually ready to share it; and also in order to help guide research in certain directions. They were remarkable people. They learned the secrets of creation and knew that the human spirit can unite its consciousness with God. They were truly great mystics and pure. In their records we find deep piety, religious faith based upon conviction, and humility before God. Following the footsteps of the saviour these great philosophers in Europe came into the knowledge of the same Yoga exercises that are practised by the great masters in the Orient. Possibly the science of Yoga may have been brought to Europe during the crusades. There are facts known about the Rosicrucians that would seem to confirm such an assumption. In any case, Christ, the Overself, is a living reality; the divine consciousness is a psychological fact. It can be experienced by everyone who really tries. Always and everywhere, truth is the same, above and beyond time and space.

In their books and records, the great initiated wrote about the philosopher's stone. In reality, it was nothing else but the Overself dwelling in the superconscious world of the human being. The divine SELF is the rock upon which the wise build their houses. That is why it was called the 'philosopher's stone'. The 'elixir of life' which is obtained from this stone and which confers eternal life is the same life-giving fluid spoken of in the Bible as the 'blood of Christ'. That is a symbolic term and at the same time a living reality. For the 'elixir of life' is a particular current in the human body which is produced in the nervous system when we make contact with the Overself. When we experience this, we feel as if a fluid were flowing through our whole body. The points at which the fluid is felt to be leaving the body are the palms of the hands, the middle of the soles of the feet, and a point slightly to the right of the middle of the breast. These are the 'five wounds of Christ', and the current flows and radiates out from these points. Its effect is life-giving. This explains the healing power demonstrated by great saints when they lay hands upon the sick. In reading some of their biographies, we can recognize this truth. The painter Albrecht Dürer who was one of the initiated, shows this in several of his pictures. Quite correctly he shows the spear wound to be on the right side of Christ's body, and the blood streaming out of the Saviour's five wounds is caught by angels in chalices. The 'stigmatization' of the saints is likewise connected with this phenomenon.

When we unite with the Christ-like, divine SELF, our spiritual sight is awakened and we become omniscient. The Rosicrucians, as mentioned above, also devoted themselves to scientific research, and in this work the purposeful development of their consciousness was a great aid. All the discoveries of modern science are confirmation of the fact that these Rosicrucians possessed an amazing amount of knowledge in the fields of physics, chemistry, natural history and psychology. But they were completely misunderstood by the ignorant masses of their time, and in the public eye their work gradually came to be identified with the problem of the philosopher's stone and transmutation of baser elements into gold. Initiates like Albertus Magnus, Paracelsus, Laurentius Ventura, Setonius, Raimundus Lullus, Agrippa of Nettesheim, Henricus Madathanus, Nostradamus and many others very well knew that their contemporaries were completely unprepared for scientific and psychological truth. For this reason they passed on their knowledge to only the most tried and trusted students, giving them direct, oral instruction. When we take the trouble to decipher their parables and symbolic writings, we are amazed at the high level of knowledge in truth attained by these outstanding men. The great masses of their contemporaries, however, interpreted all of their work from a materialistic point of view, and if once in a while some of the people got on to a hidden comment of these scientists that the philosopher's stone must be produced from man himself, it certainly never occurred to them that they had to apply this to themselves and that the immortality conferred upon them by the elixir of life applied to their consciousness, not their body. They imagined that the philosopher's stone would have to be created from the physical matter of the body. Throughout Europe, the art of 'making gold' degenerated into a veritable fever and spread out in all directions like an epidemic. Legal documents dating from the Middle Ages show that lords and barons became so obsessed with this 'gold maker's fever', that they murdered their own bondsmen in order to try to produce the philosopher's stone from the flesh or blood of their victims.

Such mass psychoses left the field wide open for quacks and charlatans. Swindlers sprang up like mushrooms after a warm summer rain. Calling themselves alchemists, they travelled about from one castle to the next, convincing the gullible and avaricious nobles that they were experts in the art of making gold. After eating and drinking their fill for weeks or months and otherwise exploiting their generous but ignorant hosts, these imposters would disappear suddenly and move on to seek new victims. Since such swindlers called themselves alchemists, the term 'alchemist' in time came to be synonymous with charlatan and quack. People began to persecute them. Finally no one knew who was bonafide and who was not, and the masses began to annoy genuine scientists too. This made it impossible for them to continue their research work. Even a genius like Paracelsus had to flee constantly from one city to another. Because of his chemical laboratory and his amazing success at healing the sick, people thought he was a sorcerer. Again and again he was forced to destroy his research laboratory in order to keep it from falling prey to the ignorant masses. This great philosopher's titanic struggle against intellectual darkness is a sad chapter in the chronicles of the time. Even the greatest physicians and philosophers were mercilessly burned at the stake if they were so much as caught in the act of dissecting a corpse. In order to avoid detection Michaelangelo and Leonardo Da Vinci did this type of research work secretly in the dead of night, guiding their scalpels and scissors by the light of candles fastened to their foreheads. Those who dared publish their discoveries were burned at the stake like Giordano Bruno. Even seven years in prison were not enough to make Bruno retract his teachings which are known to modern science as the atomic theory. Finally, at the age of only fifty-two, he was burned. Galileo was able to escape the same fate by pretending to deny his theories. Knowing that this could not change the facts, Galileo denounced his previous teachings; so only his papers were burned 'for the greater glory of God'. Thus it is easily understandable why the Rosicrucians were so careful to keep their knowledge secret. Despite all precautions, some of their members too—like Setonius—were tortured to death, but most of them succeeded in escaping the stake. In 'Faust' Goethe depicts the life of such a scientist. The discoveries of twentieth-century science confirm, point by point, the teachings of the alchemists. The discovery of atomic fission proved that it is possible to convert baser metals into gold, and each new revelation will provide further proof of the great knowledge possessed by the alchemists in all branches of science. During the materialistic age following the mystic Medieval period, scientists were quick to pass superficial judgement on things they knew little or nothing about; they spoke of quacks, charlatans and Rosicrucians in the same breath. Even though they poured out scorn and ridicule, these materialistic philosophers had their part to play.

Every epoch is followed by another one and the order in which they come is never an accident, for each automatically follows from the one before. When the pendulum has swung as far as it can to the right, it must swing just as far to the left. The stuffy atmosphere of false mysticism and superstition was ripe and ready to be swept away by a cleansing storm. It is true that such upheavals often cause damage—sometimes serious damage—but they do clean the air. In the clarified atmosphere, the damage can easily be repaired later. The ignorance, superstition and black magic of the Middle Ages *had* to be followed by a period of unbelieving materialism and the denial of everything that could not be observed by the senses.

The struggle of science was not in vain. The epoch-making invention of printing enabled ever greater numbers to read and learn. It was no longer a perquisite of specially privileged individuals to be able to study old manuscripts; books were now available for everyone. The invention of the microscope made a signal contribution towards the progress of science. The writings of great thinkers like Giordano Bruno and Galileo had been banned and burned in vain; truth could no longer be silenced by a dictum of the ruling powers. The spoken and written word travelled from person to person and set people thinking. As time went on the Bible was translated into more and more languages so that its eternal wisdom became available to ever widening circles. People began to form their own opinions of the Christian faith and grew less and less inclined to recognize the primacy of the Pope. Martin Luther posted his ninety-five points on the portals of the church at Wittenberg and the Reformation began.

Luther was only an instrument in the hand of fate. His mission was to start a spiritual current and clarify people's thinking. Although the word *Reformation*, as generally understood, refers to the *religious* movement started by Luther, other reformations were going on simultaneously in all fields of Europe's social and intellectual life. The discovery of America brought a further change, setting the stage for an immense expansion of commerce. Overnight man's intellectual horizon was widened. More and more people dared to discuss things with each other, giving open expression to their thoughts. The meditations and polemical writings of Jansen, Descartes and Pascal in their struggles with the Jesuits made people think. They split up into parties and argued endlessly. Little by little schools began to devote so much careful attention to science that it was no longer possible to brand all scientists as sorcerers. Burnings at the stake became less frequent. The overwhelming expansion of science, the simultaneous reformation of the church and the rebirth of its power are all coupled with the name of a man who drew upon the same unfathomable and eternal source of strength as the first Christians—union with the Overself. This man was Ignatius of Loyola.

Ignatius of Loyola* founded the Jesuit Order. He was one of those who demonstrated the tremendous power dwelling in the

* C. Jansen: 'The Power of the Jesuits'.

words of Christ: 'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them'. (Matthew 18; 20). Loyola proved that even if only a few people unite and concentrate their thoughts on a single goal, this union creates a psychic power that is irresistible—stronger than any weapon. Here were four men completely devoid of goods or arms, united in perfect harmony struggling only with the power of spiritual union. Every force was against them, even the Pope. People resisted their activity and refused them any assistance. Yet within the short space of fifteen years they held world-wide power in their hands!

The history of the Jesuit Order is a thrilling and most instructive study. Loyola knew the secrets of the human mind. His exercises reveal an amazing knowledge of psychology, and anyone who practises them thoroughly achieves complete self-recognition and perfect control over his spiritual forces and psychic powers. Loyola was more a master of dynamic psychic powers rather than mystic forces and he taught his pupils their use. Only men with such training could do what the Jesuits accomplished, conquering Europe and breaking through the resistance of the Orient.

Even before the Jesuits many had tried to sow the seeds of Christian teachings among the peoples of Asia—with almost no success at all. But the Jesuit Order was a spiritual union of men with purified souls. Thoroughly trained in their exercises, they possessed amazing psychic powers. With complete selflessness and absolute obedience, each member put his splendid abilities at the service of the union. No one worked for personal glory but only to attain the great goal of the society. Loyola gathered about him carefully selected and highly talented men who were thoroughly at home in all the arts and sciences and often showed amazing ingenuity in carrying out his intentions. To penetrate the closed circle of the Brahmans in India and to cross the Great Wall and begin their work in China represented a tremendous success. They even started to work in Japan. But after some initial success, the attitude of the Japanese—as a result of internal partisan struggles—turned against the Jesuit fathers who were finally crucified. Their heroic behaviour and the unswerving faith that gave them strength to bear the unspeakable tortures of crucifixion with the resignation of Christ made such a deep impression on the Japanese that many of them allowed themselves to be baptized. When, after many years, missionaries again came to Japan, they found numerous Christian natives, descendants of the Japanese who had been baptized by the Jesuit martyrs.

In China the Jesuits had greater success. Here too the beginning was hard. The Emperor lived in complete isolation, and for a long time they were not able to get to him. But the psychic power generated by the union of the priests manifested itself in various 'lucky coincidences'. The Emperor heard of their tremendous knowledge and had them brought to his court. From then on the going was easier, for the Jesuit fathers—after their own thorough psychological training—possessed tremendous knowledge of the human mind. In fact they could play with the minds of the people they met and talked to as easily and expertly as a trained musician plays a willing instrument. Once received by the Emperor, their battle was won; for anyone who talked to these Jesuit fathers *without himself possessing similar psychological knowledge and spiritual powers, became an unresisting instrument in their hands*. Loyola and his followers, however, used their tremendous power over the human mind only out of love for their fellow man, to achieve greater unity, and raise the level of morals. As long as we work with divine forces, God helps us. (We shall not undertake to discuss here whether Loyola's successors acted as unselfishly as their leader!) Recognizing the vast knowledge of the Jesuits, the Chinese Emperor put them at the head of the Imperial Observatory. This gave them power to control even the high imperial policy of China, as the Emperor was a great believer in astrology and considered the position of the stars in all his acts of state.

The Jesuits travelled through most of the world, converting more and more souls to the faith. The most beautiful example of their co-operative efforts in the spirit of Christ was their work in South America. At first the Indians were unapproachable. Because of the treacherous and merciless treatment they had received at the hands of the Spaniards, the natives were careful to avoid any contact with the white man. Nothing daunted, the Jesuits held their vespers and sang hymns every evening. As they sang, they noticed that the Indians began to gather along the river bank and in the edges of the forest to listen to their singing. Next the Jesuits began to travel up and down the river in the day time, singing their most beautiful hymns. Delighted by the melodies, the Indians came out of their hiding places and began to follow them. When they saw that no harm befell them, they began to trust the priests. The latter were again able to make use of their vast knowledge of human nature. They helped the Indians do all kinds of work, taught them to sing in choirs and gave them instruction in reading, writing, art, handicraft, and the manual trades. The Indians proved to be amazingly tractable. They enjoyed everything the kindly priests taught them, especially choral singing.

As time went on, the Jesuits organized the little Indian tribe along the lines of the primitive Christian community. Each Indian was assigned tasks corresponding to his talent and ability, and each received food, shelter and clothing from the community. No one had private property, and revenues were received only by the community for the benefit of all. Schools, hospitals, and other institutions were operated free of charge. The aged were cared for by the community.

This tiny state provided further proof of the ingenuity, unselfishness and wisdom of Loyola's followers. It is a matter of historical record that the Indians adored and idealized the kindly Jesuit priests. They went to them with all their troubles and problems and would willingly have gone through fire for them. The Jesuits treated the Indians with fatherly love and were always ready to give them advice and help. The little community grew and prospered.

The Indians understood the idea of Christian community and worked enthusiastically for their joint well-being. All were happy and contented, for each did his duty and received what he needed in return. The little state was like a big family.

Unfortunately nearby tribes became envious. The prosperity within the community led outsiders to believe it possessed rich gold mines. The little paradise was invaded by its jealous neighbours. Under the leadership of the Jesuits, the Indians made an heroic defence, partly by armed force and partly—by converting their enemies. On at least one occasion, attacking Portuguese troops noticed the happy harmonious life of the Indians and threw down their weapons to join them.

The decline of this blessed little Indian state is a sad chapter. Jealousy, malice and hostility on the outside all took their toll, and the little community gradually headed towards ruin. It is really incomprehensible that the activities of these fathers caused envy within the parent monastery in Europe. Power-hungry brothers within the order schemed and plotted until their father superior—Loyola was long since dead—believed them and sent instructions to withdraw the Jesuit priests from the Indian state. But the work the latter had done was characterized by the fact that even after they had been recalled to Europe, a large number of the Indians remained faithful to their teachings and continued to live a life of brotherly love in their Christian community. Finally, in 1848, this little state within a state was dissolved by Presidential decree and became a part of Paraguay and later Brazil. The last traces of the Jesuits' magnificent sociological experiment had disappeared.

In proportion as the power of the Jesuits grew, their enemies became more numerous. It is not our task to examine here the extent to which the Jesuits deserved this hostility, or whether the accusations were unfounded calumny spread by those whose jealously had been aroused by the Jesuits' power. Even in those times, the Jesuit Order—like every organization—was made up of people, and some there were who did not work with Loyola's spirit. On the contrary, *we are now seeking the path to be followed by the Occident*. We are seeking something we can use as an example. For this reason, we wish to emphasize those events in occidental history *which enable us to recognize the tremendous power generated by a group of people united in brotherly love*. We should like to point out that co-operative work based on unselfishness is the source of success and happiness. Christianity brought the marvellous idea of unity to Europe. Wherever this unity is preserved in our daily life—even within only a small group—the result is always a happy one. And whenever we lose sight of the principle of harmonious unity, whether we are working in a business organization, a government, a nation, or a continent, the result is decline, ruin and unhappiness.

Loyola built up the unity of the Jesuit Order on the basis of complete unselfishness. Only this unity made it possible for him and his followers to achieve such remarkable results throughout the entire world. Even though few know or are willing to admit it, modern science and civilization owe a great debt to the untiring work of Loyola's Jesuits. One of the rules of his order was that only the very best people with excellent characters could become fathers. Only carefully selected pupils were admitted as novices, and of the latter only the very best could become priests. Hence we find the most outstanding scientists, artists, orators, writers, psychologists, and even jugglers and actors—all living and working as Jesuit fathers. They established and maintained such excellent schools that the rise in the general level of art and science can be attributed largely to them. The best educated orators and protagonists of the Counter-Reformation were also Jesuits. Their versatility and vast knowledge of human nature is also shown by the fact the they put on theatrical performances—thus developing and promoting dramatic art; for they knew that *man needs diversion and mental relaxation*, and above all they knew *that it is better for spiritual leaders to provide this diversion than for amusement-hungry people to fall into the hands of unscrupulous commercial interests*. They also knew that people can be won more easily for ideas through entertainment than through direct preaching. The masters of modern advertising are beginning to come back again to the methods used by the Jesuits centuries ago.

It sounds paradoxical but it is none-the-less a fact that the Jesuits, through raising the general intellectual level, aided and abetted the spread of materialistic thinking. The more spiritual leaders learned and the deeper they penetrated beyond material things and recognized the eternal, prime cause in everything, the more these spiritual efforts strengthened their faith and brought them closer to God—in the same proportion and to the same extent the average individual became shallow and dull. As soon as the first ray of light penetrated the darkness of mediocre minds, they thought they knew everything, and their faith, based on their literal interpretation of religion, was naturally shaken. Such persons also looked into microscopes: seeing cells and bacilli and learning about the intricacies of the material construction of the human body, they felt themselves authorized to deny the existence of the soul and the infinite power we call GOD. Progress in all fields of science shook man's faith. It was easily possible to shake such a childish faith that was endowed with all too human conceptions of the kingdom of God, of little angels flying around, and of a great bearded God Father sitting on a golden throne. Such a faith could easily be shaken because it was not based on inner conviction but on imagination and dream pictures created in the faithful by other people. The light of science awakens all of us from such dreams, and the next step is seeming scepticism. *But knowledge only brings irreligion when we are content to stop half way*! True knowledge clarifies our understanding of God in whose image and likeness man was made. *True knowledge brings true faith which is unflinching because it has its origin in inner conviction and experience.*

The reaction that followed the age of false mysticism necessarily shook many people's souls. Materialism and atheism were unavoidable and served to sweep away superstition and the black magic of the Middle Ages. People began to laugh at these things, showing the superiority of their half education which freed them from ghosts, goblins and witchcraft. Sorcery disappeared, taking with it the ignorant man's idea of God. People still did not recognize the true faith of Divinity. And so they remained alone. . . .

But God is always present; he never disappears, whether we believe in him or not. Even though we may think we are very clever and temporarily blind ourselves to Him, GOD still sees us and *never* leaves us. But the tragedy and suffering of loneliness bring misguided, unbelieving man step by step closer to GOD, until his eyes are opened, he realizes the truth, and—with the joyous feeling of returning home—bows down humbly before GOD, the loving father of all. Such faith is alive because it is not based on false notions but on conviction and experience. Such faith is eternal because it springs from the immortal SELF. Such faith cannot be shaken by anything. It is sand no longer. It is a rock.

After Descartes, Jansen and Pascal, Voltaire's incisive reason and biting satire exercised a great influence on European thinking. In preparing the storm which was to follow, he played a great role. He and the writers, philosophers and free-thinkers who followed him taught people to think independently. They no longer thought with the head of their father confessor, but with their own. Throughout Europe people exchanged letters, ideas and arguments.

Then came the French Revolution. . . .

The ideas which came to life in the French Revolution spread across Europe like wildfire. In countries where political leaders understood the situation, recognized the signs of the times, and took the initiative themselves in adopting at least some of the new ideas, the explosion was not so colossal as in France. Throughout the kingdom of France, ruling circles refused to recognize the approaching danger until finally the downtrodden masses burst their bonds, swept the obstacles from their path and destroyed everything. When the storm abated, people, much shaken and sobered, generally went back to work with clearer heads. Statesmen planned for greater progress, philosophers and writers created masterpieces that spread knowledge and enlightenment, while scientists, engineers and technologists plunged into feverish activity. One after the other the forces of nature were conquered. On the material plane, the power of space and time was diminished. Powerful locomotives roar across the face of the earth, bringing people from one country to another—victory over the *land*. Giant steamships cross the seas—man becomes master of the *waters*. And with the invention of the airplane, man conquers the *air*. The discovery of electricity makes possible countless inventions. Telephone, telegraph and wireless conquer time and space. Meanwhile humanity began to realize that the earth is one of the smallest of the planets revolving around the sun and that the sun itself, this life-giving source of energy, however great it may be in comparison to the earth, is only one of the smallest of the fixed stars in the galactic system. One by one each of these startling new facts was accepted by a sceptical world; yet not one of those who dared proclaim these truths was condemned to burn at the stake.

How small is our earth!—How tiny, on the earth, is man!—and yet how great is his knowledge!—Only one thing he does not know: *himself*!

On a dissecting table there lies a handful of greyish white matter, a human brain. What tremendous force, what amazing powers were in it while it was alive—human understanding. If all the great scientists living today were to state frankly what they know about man himself, they would have to say: scarcely a little more than nothing at all! This explains why there is so much unhappiness, unrest, mental suffering and insanity in the world about us.

We can no longer avoid looking ourselves in the eye. Science, too, has come to the point where it faces the question: what is the cause, the basic reason at work in the things we see? Mathematicians, physicists, chemists, biologists—thinkers in all fields—have come to the point where the law of logic within them demands an answer to this question.

But this question and its answer mean the end of materialism!

In the soul of mankind the untenability of materialistic thinking has long since become noticeable. The terrible suffering caused by two world wars has awakened us to reality. While people enjoyed the comfort and prosperity of peace times, it was not so apparent as it is now how lonely mankind has become. But the suffering and misery of the past few years have shown that *lack of faith is equivalent to lack of strength*. The unbelieving materialist does not know where to find the strength to carry heavy burdens. He has loosened his connection with God; the nerve centres that were intended to transmit the currents from his divine SELF have atrophied; and so in desperation he stumbles about lost in the forest of his own ignorance. Necessity forces him to seek help, and *God answers those who seek*! In the last terrible world wars many soldiers learned through personal experience that GOD exists! And they brought this knowledge home with them. Many soldiers who survived owed their lives to strange and seemingly 'miraculous' events that are incomprehensible in the light of ordinary reason alone. 'While I was sitting in my shelter,' one veteran told us, 'I suddenly heard a voice outside that very clearly called out my name. I got up and went out to see who was calling me. There wasn't a soul in sight. That very instant a shell hit the shelter and blew everything to bits. Had I stayed inside, I would have been pulverized! That voice saved my life . . . !' Again and again we have heard similar stories. They are neither fairy tales nor the aberrations of hysterical men. People who experienced such things began to think. They began to realize that there are forces beyond their understanding. Where do they come from? There are still some physicians who would shrug off such experiences as 'hallucinations', but they are merely using the word to cover up what they do not know. What is an hallucination?—and *what* causes it?—and if these phenomena are hallucinations, why does one man have them at the very moment when he is in mortal danger, thus escaping with his life, while others have no such 'hallucinations' and are killed . . . ?

When the ignorant believer begins to think, when he begins to travel the path of knowledge, he first loses his faith—his childish, naive belief. But with increasing knowledge he finds his faith again. This time it is a faith built on a firm foundation, on a higher level. The Christ child lying in the manger was worshipped by two kinds of people: The shepherds from the hills around Bethlehem, and the wise men from the East. In our own times there are still these same two groups: The totally ignorant living in simple, childlike faith, and those who know a great deal and *have come to realize that there is a great deal they do not know*. People in the intermediate stage between these two extremes do not yet know Christ, because those with only half knowledge think they know everything and are blinded by their own idea of their brilliance. But the suffering of loneliness forces them to march on, and they too come to the point where they see and know and bow down in worship before the Christ Child born in their own heart.

This process began during the World War. Half-empty churches began to fill up and were soon too small. A building boom in new churches spread across Europe. Study groups, meeting to discuss Christ's teachings and their application to daily life, grew in size and number. The false attitude of a materialistic age began to crumble. Even those for whom the mere mention of faith and religion had drawn forth scorn and ridicule, began to hearken.

The ridicule which such unbelievers had heaped upon religion had had particularly harmful effects on adolescents whose general unrest and impatience with life showed how greatly they lacked a spiritual foundation, the rock of Christ, on which to build. Young people had been obliged to fight their moral battle themselves, for in many cases the adults around them had become complete slaves of their bodies and had no other goals but physical comfort and the satisfaction of their bodily appetites. Under these circumstances it was easy for young people to become slaves of sexuality, not knowing that happiness cannot be found there. The only salvation for these young people would have been to surround them, from their birth on, with the animating power of faith. But when adolescents see that the adults around them are striving only for earthly goods, title, rank, and power—not with the aim of serving the community but merely in order to reach their own selfish goals—then how can we expect such young people to strive for higher goals in life? 'We could have well-brought-up children,' says Goethe, 'if their parents were well brought up!' The generation of materialists neither knew nor believed that life can have a higher purpose. 'What do I care if Christ was crucified two thousand years ago? I am going to live . . . !' That was the unbelieving materialist's reply to those who tried to talk about Christ, for he did know that Christ is life and if we want to 'live' we must first find Christ. Not the Christ that was crucified two thousand years ago, but the Christ *who arose from the dead and who is living with us now and forever*, the Christ who is our own saviour. Those who say such things crucified Christ two thousand years ago and are still crucifying him today—*within themselves.*

Throughout all the countries of the Occident there are young people's groups, schools, scout troops and similar institutions to help adolescents gain strength in morals and comradeship so that they can learn to practise brotherly love and develop into selfless pillars of their own nation. But children who have grown up at home in an atmosphere of materialism, once they have outgrown their young people's groups, gradually cast off the things they have been so carefully taught about religion. They begin to act as if faith and religion were something shameful. Those who are still religious attempt to hide it. All too often we hear otherwise serious men say: 'Religion doesn't belong here'. Just as if an earnest man's religion were something unworthy. Why? How can faith be separated from life? Why doesn't 'religion belong here?'—when faith is the source of life!

The mistake begins when we allow our life to slip off its foundation—faith. In the Orient, the mental catastrophe of nervous breakdowns is something unheard of, despite the fact that people suffer from fire, flood, famine, earthquakes and epidemics—reason enough to cause anybody to 'crack up'. Yet oriental people bear these blows of fate with a profound faith in God. GOD is *reality* and gives strength and peace of mind to those who believe on HIM. When nervous breakdowns become a daily event people have lost their contact with God. Even the strongest tree begins to die when its roots are cut. *Man's root is the faith through which he draws strength from God.* In the materialistic age people did not strive to develop their soul and attain spiritual fulfilment; all their efforts were directed toward getting rich. Thus it was only natural for young people to feel that the attainment of wealth was the most important goal of their future life. Their choice of a profession was based on how much money there was in it. If people did not have *only this* in mind, there would be more happiness in occidental countries!

But the age of materialism has destroyed itself, for the spiritual weakening which it engendered has forced people to take a further step forward. The animating idea in the New Age—collective enterprise and co-operation—has crept in unnoticed and became reality.

Oriental visitors notice a strange fact when they travel through occidental countries. All modern institutions are actually based on the law of brotherly love, i.e., the principle of service to one's fellow man, but people simply do not yet recognize this fact. Our institutions are such that they could not exist without love. We do not realize that occidental life, from start to finish, is based on the principle of co-operation; *the only thing lacking is for us to co-operate out of love instead of compulsion*! The Occident's path to salvation is the collective, co-operative path. We people from the Orient notice this all the more because we have grown up in a different world.

In the Occident everything is collective. Children go to school together, and get a collective education. Forty or fifty of them sit and learn together in a class, and all the classes in the school, comprising 500 to 800 children, combine to form a unit. In their very earliest years children learn comradeship, the principle of equality, and the fact that they are members of a group. Throughout high-school, college, and university their education continues on a collective basis. In some towns the life of the community revolves around its educational centre with its hundreds of thousands of college or university students. In the Orient it has been the custom for thousands of years for a great philosopher or teacher to collect a few selected disciples around himself, devote his attention to them individually, and initiate them into the secrets of science. There are arts and sciences which have been handed down only from father to son; only rarely were others outside the family allowed to share these secrets.

European apartment houses are a collective form of housing. There are some buildings with hundreds of tenants living above, below and beside each other, and thus learning the principles of solidarity with their fellow man. When one tenant is in trouble, his neighbours help him as best they can—at least that is the way it *should* be!

In the Orient the custom has been for thousands of years for people to live alone, the poor in their little huts, the rich in their resplendent palaces—but each and all alone.

In the Occident even entertainment is a collective enterprise. People gather in large parties, where men, women and young people talk, play cards, eat, drink and dance—together. In the Orient such a form of entertainment has been unknown. When guests arrive, they are greeted by the husband and father. Wives and daughters retire to their rooms. The man of the East is reluctant to introduce the feminine members of his household even to his best friends.

In the Occident industries requiring collective work have reached a high level of development. Thousands and thousands of people work together in huge factories, and what they produce passes through many hands before it leaves the plant.

At the Paris exhibition I saw magnificent examples of European carpet-weaving. When I asked how these carpets were produced, I was told that one man shears the sheep, another washes the wool, another spins the thread, and again another dyes the yarn. Carpenter shops produce the looms, special artists design the patterns, and at long last, still other hands do the weaving. *Hundreds of people are needed to produce a single carpet.*

In the Orient, high up on a mountain side, the goat-herd shears his animals, spins the wool into yarn, dyes it with dye he has brewed himself, builds himself a frame of bamboo, stretches the yarn over the frame, and begins to weave. He works without a pattern, developing both form and colour intuitively as he goes along. Every design is a manifestation of his soul, the result of inner laws, just like the shape assumed by the crystals in a snowflake, or like the colour in a flower. When the carpet is finished, he sits down on it, bows low, and in deep humility sends a prayer of thanks to his Creator.

In the Occident, life is based on the Biblical teaching: 'For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of one another' (Romans 12; 4, 5). How wonderful it is to experience this!—to understand that we are parts of a great community—that we belong together like hand and foot, members of *one* body! How wonderful it is to realize that my fellow man is not a separate strange being, but *part of my* SELF, *just as I am part of him!* How wonderful to experience the great brotherhood of man and recognize that we are all pilgrims travelling towards a common goal. Even though sometimes our pathways are different and one walks in boots and another in shoes and yet another bare-footed, in reality we can all join hands and help each other towards a better, happier, and more beautiful life!

Life based on co-operation is a kingdom of heaven when each of us is conscious of this unity and strives, *not to suppress the* *individuality of others*, but to help others develop their talents and place them in the service of the community. But such a life is hell itself when people live together out of compulsion and without love; instead of helping each other towards advancement, they block one another's progress.

Christian love is based on the unity of divine consciousness. Those who are united with the rest of mankind in the divine SELF, will, through the very process of developing their consciousness, radiate their love towards one and all. Brotherly love is characteristic of the divine OVERSELF. Jesus of Nazareth knew very well that it would be useless to try to tell the great masses of people about the subconscious, the superconscious, or the psychological fact of the Overself. They would not have understood him. *But he wanted to help all mankind, not only those few individuals who have started to climb the straight, steep and narrow path towards attaining divine consciousness.* But for the masses who are not able to rise to higher spiritual levels, the only salvation lies in *putting the laws of the Overself into practice*. It is not necessary for them to grasp the truth with their intellect, if only they will strive to experience brotherly love and act accordingly. This fills them with power and strength, which, in a kind of retro-action, steadily raises and expands their consciousness. Jesus knew that the great masses were not ready to receive instruction about the *path of knowledge*. Such matters he discussed only with his disciples, speaking openly, without parables, and telling them the truth. 'His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now we are sure that thou knowest all things . . .' (John 16; 29). *As long as we have not reached God and become one with* HIM, *the only bond that connects us to God is* FAITH. *But when we have reached our goal, this bond is no longer necessary; faith is transformed into* KNOWLEDGE!

Even in Europe there have been, now and again, some mature souls who have passed from FAITH to KNOWLEDGE. Great saints and mystics have lived and still are living in the Occident as well as the Orient. In mystic union they have reached and united with the OVERSELF, just like oriental Yogis in the state called Samadhi. But only in the rarest cases has a disciple been able to follow them to the same high degree of development, and the death of the divinely conscious saints generally made it impossible for his teachings to be handed down through an unbroken chain of initiates. St. John of the Cross, for example, had no successor. Neither did St. Theresa of Carmel, St. Francis of Assisi, nor the mystics among the Rosicrucians. Europe was still young and there were but few mature souls.

It was fate that determined the way the Occident was to travel, the path of co-operation. Something great, beautiful and lasting has always materialized when at least a few people joined forces unselfishly in an attempt to carry out a great idea. Such united efforts have always been crowned with splendid success and prosperity. And the joint enterprise continued to prosper as long as the people working within it pulled together unselfishly and harmoniously. But the moment personal ambitions or the desire for power came into the foreground, the enterprise began to head inexorably towards decay and ruin.

Christ's teachings struck root in the Occident. It was here that people first filled their souls with Christ's splendid ideas, and even though we may not realize it, his divine teachings are at work in our daily life. When the first of Europe's many thousands of great apartment houses was built, its architect was certainly not conscious of the fact that in building an apartment house several stories high he was putting into practice Christ's law of brotherly love. He was merely attempting to get better utilization from the land because his town had become too densely populated. Once again we discern the hand of fate behind the very circumstances which forced the Christian Occident into living on a basis of co-operation. 'Circumstances' are often merely the form in which the will of God is made manifest. The divine law works on in silence and in secret in the depths of our hearts. Even though sometimes it seems to be concealed beneath other motives, in the end it always prevails.

From start to finish, life in the Occident is a collective affair. The path of the Occident is one of co-operation in brotherly love.

THE PATH OF THE OCCIDENT IS THE
CO-OPERATIVE PATH!

IV

The Two Paths Meet

> 'For just as the body
> is dead without mind,
> The mind is powerless
> without the body.'

The path of the Orient is the individual path.

The path of the Occident is the path of co-operation.

Which path is the right one, which the better one?

Man, in himself, is an individual, but at the same time he is part of a community. Which path, therefore, should he follow?

BOTH!

As an individual he travels on the inner path of the soul, the individual path; as a member of humanity he must travel the path of co-operation. *Neither of these two paths is complete without the other!* They must meet and merge, for one is the supplement and fulfilment of the other. *The occidental path of co-operation suppresses personality and is empty, unless, through following the inner path, we find meaning and purpose in life, while results achieved on the individual path can only be manifested through the path of co-operation.*

Mankind is a huge body, the body of the Logos—the Word. This body consists of cells. When these individual cells do not have favourable conditions for life, they begin to atrophy and with them, the whole body. Each individual cell must live and be well in order to be a useful part of the whole community. Conversely, in order to live and be healthy, each cell needs the co-operation of the whole community. The individual and the community are inseparably interdependent. To take the human body, for example, how could a liver cell be healthy, strong and stay alive if the other parts of the body community did not provide it with the proper nourishment? The health of every single liver cell depends on the co-operation of brain, lungs, stomach, intestines and all other organs, and the proper functioning of the latter depend, conversely, on the work done by the liver cells. How could a great community provide the cells in the various parts of the body with proper nourishment if these individual cells did not do their duty most efficiently? It is not sufficient, however, for the individual cells to obtain their supply from the community; it is just as important for each cell to do *the specific* work for which *it* is intended. The body cannot expect a liver cell to do the work intended for kidney cells. It is not made for such work. If forced to do what it is not intended to do, the result is disorder in the liver cell . . . and disease in the kidneys and the entire body. *It is in the interest of all for each to do the work for which he is best suited.*

Mankind can only be happy when each individual member of the human community has the chance he needs to develop his personal values and if he can do the work for which he was born! When people can develop in the direction for which they are suited, they can reach a much higher level in their work than if they are forced into activities for which they lack aptitude. When put in the right place, they work with joy, and the results are more perfect and more useful for the whole community. The welfare of the body is in the best interest of each individual cell, and the welfare of the cells is in the best interest of the body!

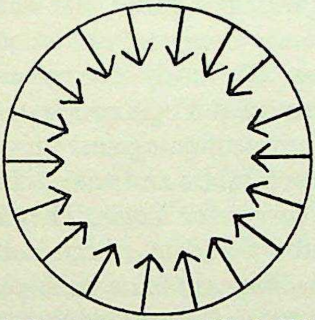
If we understand our body, we also understand the principle of reincarnation. The cells of our body live for a time, then die, and are replaced by other cells which, after a time, also die and are replaced in their turn. The unity and life of the body is continual and uninterrupted as long as the human SELF resides in the body. By the time a person reaches adulthood, every last cell that was in the body at childhood has been replaced. Not a single cell is the same. Only the SELF is the same. The SELF gives the cells life; as soon as a cell separates itself from the body animated by the SELF, it perishes. *But the life that animated the cell does not die; it animates another cell.*

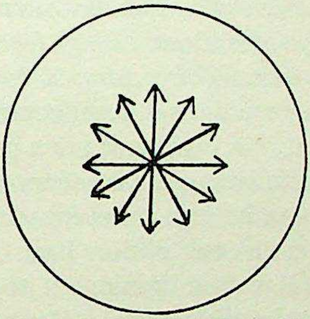
Individual people are the cells of humanity, and humanity is the body of the Word; in occidental terminology cells of the body of Christ. In Christian parlance, Christ is the universal SELF animating humanity. In death our body separates from the great community, but the life which we experienced as our 'Self' goes on living in the OVERSELF. When they die, those who have identified themselves with the body, fall into a condition approaching sleep. Paul the apostle says: 'Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed' (I Corinthians 15; 51). Those who experience their consciousness in the OVERSELF do not cease to have knowledge of their further being when the body dies; on the contrary, they continue to experience consciousness of their Self. The consciousness which has fallen into slumber, however, does not reawaken until it is clothed in a new body, that is, reincarnated, born again. Jesus says: 'He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live' (John 11; 25). Christ is our immortal SELF, no matter how we may call him.

Man is a connecting link between the spiritual and the material world. His SELF is spiritual and must consequently travel the path of consciousness to the end. That is Yoga. But as a member of the material world he must perfect himself and place his talents in the service of brotherly love, for the higher SELF manifests itself in matter as brotherly love. We experience inner unity within ourselves as universal love.

For thousands of years East and West have lived in such distance and isolation from each other that each could progress on its own path. As a result of technical developments, however, the day came when terrestrial distances dwindled to such an extent that the two Worlds came into contact with each other. How great is the wisdom of the Creator! The spiritual meeting of the two Worlds was certainly necessary, but not a single ship would have set sail to cross the vast oceans just for this goal alone. It was the earthly treasures not the spiritual riches of the East that attracted men from the West. And neither of the two Worlds dreamed that man's lust for earthly goods, in the hand of the Almighty, would be transformed into immeasurable spiritual treasures.

With the traders came missionaries, scientists, writers and artists; and the contact between India and the Occident was established. In the Bible Jesus teaches us two paths: the path of the SELF: 'I am the way, the truth and the life.' (John 14; 6). This is the inner, individual way—Yoga—the way of the Orient. And the second: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' (Leviticus 19; 18). This is the outward, community path—the way of the Occident. Our life becomes perfect only when we fulfil both of these teachings of Christ. Each of the two paths includes the other, but only when we reach the *end of the path we are following, whichever one it is*. The one path achieves unity from outside inward, the other from within outward. If we follow both paths, we reach perfection—the point where the paths meet—much more quickly.


THE COLLECTIVE PATH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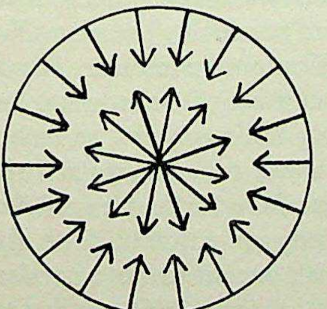
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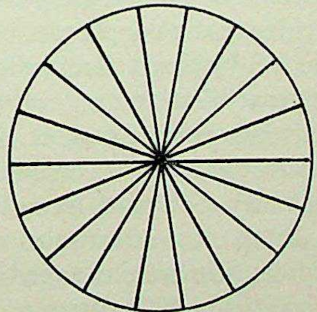
FULFILMENT

The people of the Occident brought to the Orient the pathway of companionship and took home with them the individual way —Yoga—which they learned from the people of the Orient.

Each group feared the other and each regarded the other as an enemy. They looked at each other like strange animals. It is pointless to investigate here which group was justified in its fear of the other. *The purpose of this book is to extract from all sides the points that are educational and can help us progress.* Reproaches and accusations only undermine unity. We must not look back to what existed once, but forward to what must come. Let us endeavour to achieve this as soon as possible.

When the men of the West overran the Orient, the most cultured Indians isolated themselves completely from the invading white men. On the other hand, the whites regarded the Indians as inferior because of their dark skins and *because they only met Indians of the lower castes. As a result, the white men had no idea about the high level of education and spiritual development reached by cultured Indians.* Obviously Westerners with these prejudices did not come near great Yogis or Masters. The Himalayan highlands are a good protection against unwelcome visitors. Hence the invaders mistook fakirs and snake charmers that can be seen on every street corner for Yogis. They carried this erroneous notion back to the Occident where it became part of public opinion. It took a long time for occidentals to recognize their mistake. But even today the average European is unable to differentiate between fakirs and Yogis.

As time went on, however, more and more occidentals came to the Orient. Some of them possessed the education and culture to recognize that a people capable of producing the marvellous art works left by the ancient Indians cannot be inferior. They began to approach Indians, not out of curiosity for exoticism, but with serious interest and respect. Then Indians began to have confidence in them. Thus, on both sides, each recognized that the other was just as much a creation of God as he himself. Between individuals close friendships sprang up. Little by little opinions and prejudices were changed, with benefit to both parties.

It was through Christian education that the Orient first learned about the way of the Occident, the collective path of co-operation.

State Museum Library Lucknow

Let us take a look at how India reacted to Christian ideas.

Initially great damage was done by the conflicts among missions of different denominations, and Christian education is still harmed wherever one religious group teaches that the others are on the wrong path and wherever each shows a hostile attitude towards the others. Indians were not able to understand this. Both missions taught love and Christianity, and yet each expressed scorn for the other—likewise a Christian denomination. Another great evil arose through the fact that, in the beginning, many people came to India to get rich, to pursue selfish, materialistic interests. The Indians saw that *people from the Occident taught Christianity but practised just the opposite.* They proclaimed that men are all equally children of God—they preached brotherly love—*yet they scorned Indians and spoke of them as members of an inferior race.* While they condemned the caste system of the Indians, *they simultaneously set up the 'caste of the white race' and put it in first rank.* At the same time they proclaimed: 'And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.' (Matthew 23; 12).

This all seemed very inconsistent to the Indians, and they rejected occidental Christianity. But when a truly great apostle came and really practised the Christian faith in his own life, he succeeded, through unselfish work, in winning over many Indians to the beauty of Christian living. Gradually western missionaries curtailed their mutual animosity, founded schools, created opportunities for employment, helped the suffering Indians, and taught them physical and mental hygiene. Such work was convincing for the Indians, and they began to place more and more confidence in Christian missionaries.

Even today members of higher castes are hard to win over. Just as in the parable of the sower who went out to sow, and 'some seed fell on good earth' and bore fruit an hundred fold, we must remember that when a seed is transplanted to a different country—even though it may take root and grow—it changes and adapts itself to its new surroundings. Members of higher castes were forced by circumstances to give their children an English education. When these children grew up, they in turn gave their children an English education, not out of compulsion, but because, looking ahead, they felt it the wise thing to do. They recognized the great values in the collective educational system of the Occident.

Children experience the feeling of belonging to a group, being part of a unit. They unconsciously and automatically subordinate their personal wishes to the interests of the group. They learn the pure joys of living together. All children have an instinctive wish to share their feelings with those they love. If we gain the confidence of little children, they will come running with their toys to share their happiness with us. Is there a greater joy for children—or for adults—than group games? Laughter is all the more pleasure when several persons laugh together. And pain is easier to bear when shared with others.

The OVERSELF dwells in the depths of the human mind, and its truth manifests itself in us instinctively in our tendency towards gregariousness. Among children the system of collective education develops, in an almost perfect manner, the attitude of solidarity. How strong can be the fraternal feeling among young people in a class! The most noble instincts towards playmates and other pupils are consciously developed during the years spent together at school. Research psychologists know how many different kinds of mental disease can befall a lonely child. This is further proof that mankind is a unit. When a child is shut out from a group, his life is stunted, he becomes sick. And as a rule, the quickest cure can be achieved by putting such a psychopathic child into a good school where it can be brought up in a group.

In India there is scarcely any need to fear the problem of the only child. Indians are filled with such deep piety and faith that they do not try to avoid the blessing of children. For Indian women, children are sacred, and they would never think of doing anything to reduce their fertility merely to preserve their 'figure'. All the more, as outward appearance does not play such an important role in India, and a woman does not have to fear losing her husband's love just because her girlish shape is altered through the blessing of children. Most Indian families have five or six children. The pathetic case of the 'only child' is so rare as to be practically non-existent. The family circle is also different from the school community. In the family, the community is based on common blood, while in the school group it is created out of human solidarity. In India, where children of various races meet in English schools, this is particularly important.

The Scout movement in India was under excellent leadership, and the boys really lived together in complete equality, mutual respect and brotherhood. From personal experience I know the deep impression the spirit of comradeship prevailing among Boy Scouts made on the Indians.

I was ten years old when, coming home from school one day, I saw boys of various ages playing and working together in groups in a spacious garden. Not daring to approach openly, I slipped up through the bushes and watched them in secret. Day after day, when school was out, I came back to the same hiding place. Completely absorbed in watching the boys at their games, I did not notice a man standing beside me until, all of a sudden, he took me by the hand. I was frightened to death and began to cry out, 'Let me go, let me go! I haven't done anything! Don't hurt me! I'll never come back! Just let me go!' The man was an Englishman with a kindly face, Mr. Oakley, the Scoutmaster. He did everything he could to calm me. I can still see his benevolent face before me as he said, 'I won't hurt you. I like you, boy. Come along with me. Don't be afraid!' But in vain. I did not believe him. I was afraid he was going to turn me over to the police—which would have been easy enough, as the police station was located right next door. Summoning all my strength, I wrenched myself free and raced home like a deer pursued.

But the Boy Scout group had cast a magic spell over me. Time after time I saw my schoolmates march off to a Scout meeting, and each time I admired them with feelings of painful envy. A few days later I could not stay away any longer. Again I hid in the bushes and, with longing in my heart, I watched the boys at their games. But all my precautions were useless. Suddenly Mr. Oakley stood behind me, held both my arms fast . . . I was caught for sure. Again I began to cry out for him to let me go. But his face was sad. 'Don't go away,' he soothed, 'that would make me unhappy. I like you, little boy. If you go away, I will be sad.

Come in and I'll show you everything, even the Cub Scouts' den.'

I was astonished. Will he really be sorry if I go? How come? The English scorn us. How could this distinguished man be sad if I went away? Half out of amazement and half out of sheer curiosity as to what could be going on in this 'Cubs' den,' I let him put his arm about my shoulders and lead me into the magnificent bungalow, straight up to the tea table. My fears were not yet banished. Mr. Oakley spoke to me in a friendly tone, seated me at the table, and poured me a cup of tea. I was still very reserved, still afraid something dreadful was going to come out in the end; I would not have touched the tea for anything in the world. Mr. Oakley attempted to encourage me; when he saw how suspicious I was, he said to me, 'Go ahead and drink your tea. I have already drunk mine. While you're taking tea, I will finish my painting.' Then he did, in fact, sit down at an easel, and started in painting where he had left off, just as if I were not there. When I saw that nothing had happened that could become dangerous, I began to sip my tea, and as it was very tasty, I drank it up. Now Mr. Oakley turned to me and asked whether I would like to paint? 'Yes,' I said. Then he showed me his pictures and asked me whether I liked to sing. 'Very much,' I replied. And finally he asked me 'now, my son, do you collect postage stamps?' This question gave me another scare. Why was he calling me *his son*? Wasn't I the son of my mother and my father; I didn't want to be anyone else's son. Reservedly and cautiously I answered, 'yes, I collect stamps'. Then he promised he would give me some when I came back again next time. Although this sounded very attractive, I thought it best to get away as quickly as possible from a person, who, without any cause, called me '*his son*' . . . perhaps he wouldn't even let me go? But he *did* let me go, even very graciously accompanied me to the gate, and asked me whether I liked to ride in a motor-car. When I said 'yes' he promised to take me for a ride to the seashore if I came back.

It took me a week to get over my fears sufficiently to dare go back to Uncle Oakley and the Scout group. He gave me a very friendly reception. First he showed me his collection of several thousand postage stamps, *actually* gave me a few, and *actually* took me for a ride to the beach. This made me very happy, and I began to have confidence. During the ride, he asked whether I would like to play with the other boys. Naturally I wanted to, 'but,' I said, 'I am not a club member'.

'Well, just sign up,' encouraged Uncle Oakley, just as if this were the most natural thing in the world. I was amazed . . . how come? . . . I, the little Indian boy despised by the English, could join a club of English and Anglo-Indian children . . . ? Yes I really could. My father signed the application, and I became the first Indian Scout in this troop in Madras. Mr. Oakley treated me as lovingly as my own parents, and I no longer took offence at his constantly calling me 'my son'. On the contrary, I was proud of it. I called him Uncle Oakley and learned *that profound spiritual relationships are even possible between English and Indians*. Next to my own parents, he was the nearest person to my heart, and after my father's death, he continued to be a spiritual support and a fatherly friend. He taught me to come out of my reserve and experience the sacred community of human companionship. He taught me to have pity on those who harm or wrong us, and to forgive them as they are acting out of ignorance, not wickedness. Through the example of his own life, he taught me the majestic power of Christ's teachings. I came to Europe with him, and later, when I was in Budapest, he visited me.

I have told all this in such detail because the meeting of Orient and Occident does *not* become reality through trade agreements, *nor* through political relations, but through *the spiritual ties of individual people*. Even though a boy is a very inconsequential member of the whole, the *meeting* is the essential, the most important fact. Countless meetings, each apparently unimportant in itself, have changed the picture of India. Indians are learning the value of true collectivism and companionship in school and in later life. New generations, no longer living the old, isolated life of the Indians, are gradually taking up the new life of comradeship.

There are many who regret this change which entails the loss of numerous values. The introduction of modern industry and factory production, for example, jeopardizes Oriental arts and crafts, based as they are on individualism, particularly carpet weaving and similar trades. The Germans have set up large factories where hundreds of looms weave the same patterns. In such a factory, a pattern master stands and calls out each step in weaving the design and how many red, blue, or yellow loops are to follow. Carpet weaving is done quite mechanically. There is no longer any possibility of creating different shapes, individual ideas, or combining colours according to the spiritual experience of the weaver. Naturally the carpets are lifeless, and an expert immediately recognizes them as factory goods, even though they are hand-woven. Even the wool is different; it is no longer dyed in vegetable acids. It is low quality wool dyed with German made aniline dyes. Wool from sheep or goats, when dyed with vegetable dyes, does not lose its colour, it can be washed and remains unchanged. What marvellous colour magic can be produced from vegetable dyes! Such colours cannot be even approximately attained with aniline, and aniline dyes are not washproof. But the dying process is very quick and extremely cheap. Thus the goat-herd leaves his mountain home, travels to the city, sells his wool for good money, and buys cheap material for weaving carpets. In this way, individual art and high-grade materials for carpet weaving become ever rarer. A great loss! For in time Oriental carpets will completely disappear except for a few samples in museums, like the few remaining works of ancient Egyptian art. Art itself does not die, it merely takes on a new form. So, too, the art of the Orientals will find new opportunities to manifest itself. New generations will bring forth new forms of expression, and, hence, a new art.

Through its contact with the West, India was spared the fate of running aground and degenerating in its ancient traditions many of which have solidified into dogmas. For India was awakened by the Occident. When we look closely, this awakening shows some very painful points. But they will disappear; the good will remain. And what remains will be a new India, awakened to consciousness, strong of muscle and glowing with power. But this will take time, as four hundred million people cannot be transformed and taught new ways of thinking with a flick of the wrist. Eternity has time enough. The process has begun and cannot be stopped.

In times past India achieved the individual path, the path of the higher SELF—YOGA. This path was recognized, used, and developed to perfection. It is being used today and passed on to coming generations. But now it is time to achieve the path of companionship and the only possibility of so doing is through brotherly love.

The solution of all India's problems lies in the spirit of brotherly love. Nothing else can free India from the strangle hold of the caste system. In India sixty million pariahs are living in the most abject misery, and this terrible burden cannot be lifted in any other way than through the realization of unity based on true brotherly love. For these poor, ignorant people cannot understand and follow the Yoga path. The caste system is one of the greatest obstacles for healthy development. In ancient times it was a wise, beautiful law. Today it is outmoded, lifeless; it lies on the land like a stiffened corpse, permanently hindering people from drawing new life and strength from the fresh air of cleansing storms sweeping over the world today.

The concept 'Christianity' is, in India at present, still inseparable from the Occident. Although Christianity originally came from the East—from Jerusalem—for two thousand years the Occident has been transforming it and fitting it to its own image and spiritual experience. Western people have not brought India 'Christianity' but the '*Christianity of the Occident*'. But the latter is something the Indian cannot take on. The Indian cannot cease to be an Oriental!

If we wish to travel the same path as the people of the West—in the footsteps of Christ—we must walk this path on our own feet, not in the shoes of Western people. *We can only accept Christ and His magnificent teachings for themselves—separate from Western civilization.* India feels it belongs to the Orient and cannot permit herself to be forced into the ideas of another world, *especially when this other world is not able to practise what it preaches about these magnificent ideas*! She is disinclined to take on the 'Christianity of the West' but she does accept Christ. India is in the process of creating for herself an 'Oriental Christianity!'

Swami Vivekananda, who in his lectures and books mentions

Christ's teachings again and again and calls upon people to put them into practice—as well as Gandhi and all the other great teachers who have devoted their lives to making Christ known in India—have recognized very clearly what is going on there. The greatest event recorded in the Bible is being repeated: the birth of Christ; and India is on the way to making HIM a real part of her life.

One of the Occident's most important apostles of Christian thinking is the American minister Dr. E. Stanley Jones. I have attended his sermons, but much of what I saw and learned at his meetings in India I have only come to understand now that I have become acquainted with the Occident. Dr. Jones tells his experience in India in a touchingly beautiful book: 'The Christ of the Indian Road'*. I shall quote a few passages from this book, for there are few indeed who could tell better than Dr. Jones how the Indians have received Christ.

> 'The fact that the Orient judges the Occident in this way in the personality of Jesus is clear from the following lines which a Bengal poet once wrote at Christmas and sent to C. F. Andrews, a friend of mine:
>
> "Oh great and mighty Christ, on the blessed day of your birth, we who are not Christians bow our head to worship you. We love you and worship you, we who are not Christians, because the bond of blood connects you with Asia. We weak people of a great country have been crucified on the cross of slavery. Wounded and full of pain, we silently look up to you every time our torture begins again. Our foreign ruler is a crown of thorns over us, and our own caste system is a bed of nails on which we are lying.
>
> The whole world is upset at Europe's hunger for territorial possessions. With unholy rejoicing Imperialism dances in Mammon's arms. It dances over Europe's joyless homes where the three monsters of war, passion for power, and covetousness are revelling in orgies.
>
> There is no room for you in Europe, Christ our Master;

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* The extracts from "Christ of the Indian Road" by Dr. E. Stanley Jones are reproduced by permission of Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., London, and The Abingdon Cokesbury Press, of Nashville, U.S.A.

> leave Europe and come to us! Choose Asia, the land of Buddha, Kabir and Nanak for your home. Looking upon you, our pain-filled heart is freed of its burden. Oh great Master of love, come down into our hearts and teach us to feel the sufferings of others, so that with infinite love we can serve the lepers and pariahs."
>
> This appeal of the poet loses none of its judgement and compelling power, even though we would rather he had not said Christ should leave the West, but that he should have prayed Christ to penetrate deeper into the life of Occidental people. Come, Christ and leave the place?—No, Christ, don't leave the place! Because the heart of the people of the Occident is also sorely afflicted—and if the Orient is nailed to the cross of slavery, the Occident suffers on the cross of materialism. We both need you!'

In the second part of his book Jones says:

> 'Jesus came in order to be life, and if people penetrate deep enough into life, they will meet Christ who is life itself. He did not come to bring us a few truths and to set them up beside other truths as many people superficially believe. Christ came *to be* truth itself, and if we go far enough with truth, truth will take us by the hand and lead us till we recognize Him who is truth itself. Dean Inge, a teacher of Hindus, is right in saying: "Jesus did not come to bring us a religion but to be a religion himself." And if we really take religion seriously we must become like He was; otherwise we are not truly faithful.'

India's soul is deeply touched by Christ and is inclined to follow Him. *But she does not follow those who, in Jesus' name, preach hatred!* When the Indian accepts an idea, he lives it. In India where so many people practise *silence*, no *words* will succeed which are not supported by deeds. Dr. Jones tells us a very characteristic event:

> 'The great question India is constantly asking—even without words—is not how ardent you are, but whether you are in possession of Christ's way of thinking. This fact was driven home to me one day when two young, simply dressed, bare-

footed Hindus came to visit me. I had many conferences that day but none of them gave me so much pleasure as the hour I spent with those two young people. They were earnest, intelligent and understanding. The following day they came again to tell me who they were—the sons of the two richest and noblest families in the town. The day before they had purposely come bare-footed and poorly dressed in order to put me to the test and see whether I really and honestly meant what I had preached the previous night, namely, that Jesus sees only the human being without taking his race, colour and fortune into consideration. They wanted to see whether I would act accordingly if they came poorly dressed.

The Indian can only be won over by facts but never by empty words.—An Indian who was once lecturing to pedagogues in Southern India about education suddenly interrupted his speech and said: "I realize that there are numerous Christians among us. Although this is not a religious lecture, let us stop long enough to say that India would lie down at their feet tomorrow if Christians would live their life as Christ taught".'

Indians are not superficial. If they find it worthwhile to occupy themselves with something, they experience it in the very depths of their soul. As mentioned in previous chapters, everyday life in India is inseparable from religion, for Indians *live* their religion. They see and accept Christ from this point of view. People in the Occident preach Jesus Christ. But Indians are deeply and penetratingly concerned with whether it is possible to *live* Christ. As a result there are countless Indians who, although they have never been baptized, have come to recognize Christ and practise and *live* His teachings!

One day I got to chatting with a relative who was of the same age as my father and who, thanks to his wisdom and clean living, was a well-known Brahman. We talked about Christ. As he talked with deep reverence about Him, I asked him why he did not want to be baptized. The wise man looked at me kindly and silently and said: 'My Son—Christ!—Krishna!—Not the name is important but the fact. We must recognise Christ within ourselves and live Him. He knows that I belong to Him. Whatever His name is, that is enough for me.' At that time in my childish way of thinking I did not quite understand his answer. But now I do understand it—especially since I have come to know many Christians who pay lip service to Christ but who nevertheless do not know HIM—nor does Christ know them. . . .

Mahatma Gandhi, one of India's greatest sons, was not officially a Christian but his life was the cross itself. For whatever cause he fought, he used Christ's weapons, the invisible weapons of truth and love. His greatest teacher was Christ himself. As mentioned above, he always carried the Bible with him, read in it daily and taught from it. When Dr. Stanley Jones asked him how to get Christianity accepted in India, he answered:

'Firstly I would suggest that all Christians begin to live as Christ lived.'—

Dr. Jones then goes on to say:

> 'He did not have to tell me more; this was quite sufficient. I knew that through his eyes India's 400 million people were looking at me, and that his voice was the voice of millions of Oriental people talking to me, the representative of the Occident, and saying, through me, to the Occident: "If you come to us in the spirit of your Master we cannot resist you. . ." Gandhi also said: "I advise you to transform religion into deeds but without doing violence to it, and without degrading it." This advice is as important as the first. The greatest non-Christian alive was telling us not to do violence to our religion . . . Thirdly Gandhi said: "I would suggest you put emphasis on love, because love is the centre and the soul of Christianity." By love he did not mean the feeling, but rather *love as a creative power*. Gandhi makes us realize love as a real power in the moral universe. He wanted love to be practised in single groups, races, and nations as a unifying force for the redemption of the world. It is not astonishing that the eyes of such a man whose soul really experienced true love, filled with tears when I read aloud the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians on the subject of love. Fourthly Gandhi said: "I would suggest a more careful study of all non-Christian

religions in order to find out what is good in them and to acquire the ability to approach people with more understanding." '

Very true,—we must be extremely grateful for all truth, wherever it is found. We must know that every truth is merely a finger pointing towards Christ who is TRUTH.

The famous specialist, Dr. Erwin Baktay, treats this problem thoroughly in his book on India and sees the question quite clearly. He is also acquainted with Dr. Jones' activity and writes about it as follows:

> 'After a hard inner struggle, Dr. Jones dared to take the decisive step. Frankly and openly he admitted that *he learned more from India than he was able to teach her*. He learned the essential truth that the essence of Christianity is CHRIST alone, and all the rest—all our opinions and cleverly devised systems —have been added on by human beings and can only be accepted to a limited extent under certain special circumstances. India can have nothing to do with the religious wars of the Occident, the theological debates, and the whole form of Occidental Christianity with all its local problems; but India is all the more deeply concerned with Christ and the Gospels. If the occidental world had the right to develop Christian religious forms according to its own pattern—adapting them to its own situation—India has at least the same right to form its own Christianity; all the more so as India's spiritual soil—through thousands of years of religious fervour, an unflagging search for God, and unquenchable thirst for truth—has been cultivated into a humus that is much more suitable for receiving the Gospel and keeping it pure, than medieval Europe with its pagan heritage of Greco-Roman civilization, or the modern Occident, languishing as it is in materialism, greed for power, and a chaos of artificial systems.'

Very true! The Orient can indeed have nothing to do with the religious wars and theological disputes of the Occident. But it is to the undying credit of the West that it proclaimed Jesus Christ to the Orient. Primarily this was the work of those great teachers who lived in Christ and who sacrificed their entire lives to help India's wretched masses by teaching them the Gospel. For the masses cannot find truth through Yoga—the individual path—because their level of consciousness is much too low for them to be able to understand what it is all about. Jesus told his disciples: '. . . it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.' (Matthew 13; 11). But even the most miserable pariah can find salvation through following the path of brotherly love. Love, compassion, kindness, understanding—are all higher than the intellect. They can all be understood and experienced by all creatures, from persons on the highest intellectual plane right down to the most abject lunatic. Universal love has fire and power. It shines its way through every obstacle, even the darkest brain, and its warmth finds its way to the human heart! There is no heart so stony that it can resist the fire of love.

The salvation and renaissance of India is the development of consciousness in the divine Overself! Its blood is the river that flows through the ancient land and fills it with new, refreshing life. Its body is the heaven-sent bread that feeds the hungry millions, giving them strength to begin a new life. 'Behold, I make all things new' (Revelation 21; 5), says the Bible, and we know that this 'I' is the Logos, the Overself, or as the Bible expresses it, Christ.

India understands Christ and accepts him because she recognizes in his teachings the truth whose laws are operating in nature and whose reality she feels in her own being. But India has been forced to learn that there is a difference between 'Christianity' and 'Christian'. There are many things India cannot accept from Christians because they contradict the laws of truth operating throughout all the universe and because—strange as it may seem—they contradict the true teachings, the spirit of Christ that fills the Gospel. From every word of the Gospel there flows the breath of truth. This truth has struck deep roots in India's heart. But she cannot accept the things people, with all too human ways of thinking, try to add to the Gospel, because such additions fail to draw forth an echo from the depths of her soul.

Indians, for instance, are repelled when missionaries talk about a God of vengeance who, like an all too human being, punishes sins with the most severe penalties, whereas in the Bible, Christ, with every word, proclaims God's love, kindness, and compassion—even saying to the worst sinner: 'Go, and sin no more'. (John 8; 11).

The Bible tells how the prodigal son is welcomed back by his father with open arms and greatest love. And still there are people who preach an all-avenging God who smites sinners with the most dire punishments—even eternal damnation. The Indian knows very well that we are penalized for our sins—not because God takes pleasure in seeing his imperfect children suffer for their transgressions, but because the penalty is the opportunity to make amends for mistakes committed out of ignorance.

But how can the idea of eternal damnation be reconciled with a God of love and forgiveness. If a human father of a prodigal son was so kind as to forgive his son without inflicting any punishment, how can God, who is GOODNESS itself, be expected to punish a finite sin with an infinite penalty? No, the Indian cannot accept the idea of a vengeful God if at the same time he is supremely happy to recognize as his model the Christ who, in his divinely beautiful teachings, called out: 'Love your enemies' (Matthew 5; 44). This is something Indians do accept. They try to love and try to fill their hearts so full of love that, in their daily lives, they may actually succeed in forgiving every enemy in order to be like Christ who taught this idea. How then could Indians agree that God not only fails to love his enemy, but even punishes him with terrible tortures and all the anguish of hell? Christ teaches that the conversion of one sinner causes more rejoicing in heaven than ninety-nine righteous people. The Indian finds this beautiful, noble, divine. He sinks down in the dust before him who, nailed to the cross, said, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do' (Luke 23/34). But Indians turn away from those who would make God out to be a vengeful being spewing out curses, rather than a God of love and mercy.

Indians feel much closer to teachings which emphasize charitable, Christ-like forgiveness than to a concept of God who, like a human being, threatens us with wrath and suffering. *Real, living religion can never be built upon fear.*

In numerous cases I have found that my fellow countrymen refused to be baptized merely because this meant they would have to give up—not their faith—but their convictions about reincarnation. I emphasize the word *conviction*, because in India there are uncounted thousands of people who remember their previous life very precisely and can prove this by reliable, examinable data. They cannot renounce this conviction, for to do so would be a lie.

In the field of psychology the Occident has also progressed far enough to accept the hypothesis of an existence preceding conception as the only possible explanation for various mental phenomena. Numerous experiments by reputable psychologists —all of them supporting the doctrine of reincarnation— have been published in medical journals all over the world. We Indians follow the discoveries of western science in this field rather like a musician with an excellent ear would follow a scientific explanation about the laws of harmonics, periodicity, and the relationship of sounds when he finds that science is discovering all the things that he, as a musician, simply *hears*. The ear takes no notice of, and gives no thought to the number of vibrations. This is a matter for the intellect. The ear simply *hears* all the laws of harmonics *through direct experience*. Why is the simultaneous sounding of some tones harmonious, and why do other tones give disharmony? Why does one chord create a feeling of perfection and satisfaction, and why, when we hear another chord, do we wish it to be discontinued and replaced by other tones? Our ear feels, hears and knows it. This hearing cannot be silenced by any command. Anyone who tries is acting counter to himself, and those who disobey natural laws are simply overrun or swept aside. The Indian knows about reincarnation simply from direct experience within himself. *He does not believe in it because it is a tenet of faith; on the contrary, it has become a tenet of faith because it is a psychological fact of which the majority of orientals are conscious.*

Moses—to draw a parallel—knew the laws of hygiene. But he did not talk much about them to his people. Instead, he made them a matter of religion in order to be able to apply the truth he knew for the benefit of public health, even among those who were unable to grasp the matter with their intellect. With the development of the human race, Moses' religious commandments concerning hygiene have been transformed into scientific facts. The time is not far off when reincarnation too will be separated from religion and included within the body of scientifically established truth. The Indian does not understand why he should deny something he knows as surely as he knows he is alive in this present existence. He cannot see how this conviction of his could run counter to God and brotherly love.

It is unnecessary here to summarize the evidence for reincarnation, for it is not my intention to try to convince anyone of the correctness of this teaching. Whether one believes in reincarnation is of no consequence whatever—for believing or not believing is a matter of experience within oneself—but one cannot wipe away the conviction one has obtained through experience. Facts have a strength of their own, and sooner or later this strength conquers every denial. Jesus himself said that there is no secret which would not be known. I shall merely give a picture of the view taken by Indians of occidental teachings.

It is remarkable that the first missionaries who got thoroughly acquainted with India and her religion recognized that the latter contained the same truths as Christ's doctrine. If therefore we want to win the Indians over to Christianity, we cannot do so through destroying the Indian's faith. We cannot say, 'This truth is not valid in your religion, but only in ours.' On the contrary, we can only win over the Indians by supplementing and further developing their faith through teaching brotherly love. It was these first missionaries who laid the foundation for an oriental Christianity, and their early successes must be attributed to the fact that they recognized this inner truth and adjusted themselves to it. Later missionaries deviated from this principle and the result was failure.

The activity of St. Francis Xavier and his followers, for instance, was successful only within the lower castes. The upper caste of Brahmans rejected their doctrines and, for the most part, were not converted until the Jesuit father Nobili came to India from Italy.

A genius with the ability to penetrate into the oriental way of thinking, Nobili succeeded in getting himself accepted by the Brahmans. Even more, he gained their confidence to such an extent that great numbers of them followed him and were baptized in the faith. He was one of those brilliant men to whom the Jesuit order owed its spiritual unity and temporal power. Nobili appeared in the Indian town of Madura in the yellow linen costume of the Brahmans. He wore a turban and sandals, took up lodgings in the elegant quarter of the Brahmans, ate no meat, drank no wine, and lived on rice, vegetables, milk and cheese. He engaged household servants of Brahman descent and observed Brahman rules and customs in every respect. He spoke of himself as a Brahman of Italian descent who had come to India because he had heard about Brahmans of great wisdom living there, and because he wanted to make their acquaintance. The Indian Brahmans, once they had convinced themselves about his way of living, welcomed him and took him into their homes.

They were amazed at the knowledge of the strange 'Brahman'. Nobili had a perfect command of Hindustani and Tamil. Even his pronunciation—so we are told—was perfect. And he was able to quote in Sanskrit the most difficult passages of the Vedas, Apastamba Sutras and Puranas, and all the rest of India's holy books. He knew the ancient songs called 'Raga' and enjoyed singing them to his sizable audience, accompanying himself with a guitar. One and all were amazed at his comprehensive knowledge, and he was the object of general admiration and respect.

Even today it is difficult to understand how Nobili, in those days when technical facilities were so limited, was able to gain such enormous knowledge about the science of the Indians—and to do so before he left Europe for India. Nobili recognized the great similarity between the fundamentals of the Hindu and Christian religions, and he taught Christianity, not as something very different from Indian religion, but rather as its supplement and fulfilment. The Brahmans were convinced of Nobili's truth, found Christ's teaching perfect, and were baptized in masses. That was the first time that men of the high caste of Brahmans were converted to Christianity. But when Nobili left India, the conversions ceased. At the same time as Nobili, other Jesuit fathers were active as missionaries. Many of them spoke perfect Hindustani and Tamil and practically knew India's holy books and legends by heart. *In these great Fathers, Orient and Occident met for the first time. Several of these missionaries went through Yoga training. They were the first western Christian Yogis.*

If later missionary work had followed this method, Christianity would probably be the predominant religion in India today. But there came the missionaries of various Christian denominations who—as already mentioned—started their work *by awakening hatred within the Indians, not only for their own religion, but also for the other Christian denominations.* Just as Indians are won over when one talks to them of love, in the same way they are repelled when they see hatred. That is why the spread of Christianity came to a standstill. And only within the last fifty years has the Christian message begun to gain ground again; numerous missionaries, following the wise methods of the seventeenth-century Jesuits, have started in again to preach the Gospel of love, not hate. Among these is Fox, a priest who was himself converted to Protestantism, and who had a wonderful gift for finding ways to gain the Indians' confidence; another converted priest Schwarz; Dr. E. Stanley Jones; and finally a Christian Indian Sundar Singh, who has done a marvellous job of converting Indians to Christianity.

Born in a noble Sikh family, Sundar Singh became a disciple of Yoga while yet a boy. One night he had a vision of a resplendent human figure, like a picture of Christ. After that he became a Christian and devoted his life to Christ. Following his illumination he wandered throughout the Indian countryside, with a staff in his hand, just like Christ's first disciples, preaching the Gospel to his countrymen. He too was a living embodiment of the meeting of East and West. He was a saint, a Yogi who knew that the final goal of the Yoga path is the divine SELF, the CHRISTSELF.

Sundar Singh taught truth in that he fulfilled his mission in brotherly love. Belonging to no denomination, he bore witness only to Christ. His missionary work was and still is extremely successful. Its effect was beyond belief. This great saint was an Indian; he taught Indians in *their* language, in a way adapted to *their* psychological development. Naturally, the Gospel of love he taught was understood. Several times he went to Tibet as a missionary, always knowing that he would die the death of a martyr there. This indeed is the fate that finally overtook him. He was one of Christ's most faithful servants. He was the first *oriental Christian Yogi.*

The Occident brought India the collective path, the path of brotherly love, the CHRIST *who manifests himself* in the unity of mankind. In return, the Occident received from India the individual path, the inner path of the soul—the secret of the CHRIST *who dwells within the human heart*—YOGA.

The West has learned the secrets of the East in two ways; firstly through the descriptions, writings and books or Occidentals who have travelled to India and been initiated; and secondly, through oriental teachers who have travelled to the West with the task of bringing oriental wisdom to the western world.

What forces have caused oriental masters to reveal to the western world the secrets of the human mind?

The wise men of the Orient measure time, not only by the circuit of the earth about the sun, but also by the conical orbit of the earth's axis. The period of time required by the earth's axis to complete this orbit once is called a cosmic year and corresponds to approximately 25,920 terrestrial years. This figure divided by twelve gives us the cosmic months, each 2,160 terrestrial years in length. Each cosmic month brings the earth a new era, with new intellectual currents. And at the end of each era, humanity undergoes an 'examination'. At such times all forces are liberated from their regular channels and can affect mankind to their fullest extent. During this 'examination' people are subjected to a severe test to determine whether they have enough judgement and will-power to select among the forces affecting them, the ones which should be accepted and manifested, and reject the ones which should be avoided. Expressed symbolically, 'the heavens are open,' as Jacob saw them, and 'from the lowest rung on the ladder to heaven, up to the highest, the angels are going up and down' in order that mankind 'may be weighed' to see who qualifies and who is 'found wanting' (Daniel 5; 27).

A new spirit of the times sweeps over the earth and drives out the old era. Worlds crumble and fall, while new worlds arise. Everywhere things are in a ferment, in turmoil, in trouble. The storm raging in man's soul manifests itself in war, revolution and mass murder. Everyone is forced to show his true face, because the changing times are inexorable and compel people to take off their masks. The atmosphere is demonic. Everybody suffers under the steel-shod hoofs of the four horsemen of the apocalypse. The unleashed forces, the 'evil spirits', roam the earth like bloodhounds pursuing humanity.

But mature individuals who are filled with Christian love are safe from their attack; for love, like a great flame, sweeps away shadows and darkness! Even during the bitterest tribulations, these great souls cling to their faith in God; no matter what they have to go through outwardly, their inner power is unbroken. Armoured and strong, they resist all attacks and temptations of the lower forces, opening their souls, wider and wider to receive ever more strength from above.

Many will probably ask, 'What is the reason why—symbolically speaking—evil spirits are loosed and able to bring about the most terrible destruction on earth?' We must not forget that it is extremely difficult to talk about the level of causation, because completely different laws prevail there from those we know on the earthly plane. Consequently we lack the necessary concepts, or else, in their objective reality, they mean something entirely different from what we believe. The expression 'evil spirit', for instance, is one that is subject to as many different interpretations as there are people who use it. In reality there is nothing truly 'evil' per se. But there are forces whose manifestation through matter appears to be evil as seen from the human viewpoint.

These forces are gigantic and their effect on the earthly plane is brutal. But they are necessary; for without them there could be no development, no progress. To draw a very simple parallel, annual spring cleaning causes scandalous disorder in the household. Everything is out of place, there is no semblance of the accustomed arrangement, the broom swirls dust up out of every nook and corner, the rugbeater makes clouds of dust, the air becomes unbearable, the smell of petrol and turpentine follow us everywhere. The cleaning women are like 'evil spirits' turned loose on the house; the broom and the rugbeater are like the horsemen of the apocalypse from whom a peace-loving person tries to flee. The big house-cleaning event is—alas!—very evil for the inhabitants, and yet *it is set in motion by the kindliest, most loving spirit, the housewife herself.* She knows that it is necessary; for only by such an ordeal can she be sure of a clean, orderly, healthy home for her loved ones.

The word 'bad', as applied to the forces that sweep over the earth at the turning point between two ages, can only be used from the purely human point of view. These forces are just as necessary as the broom in spring house-cleaning. And just as the cleaning women are not working *against* the housewife but *with* her, at her command, the so-called 'evil spirits' operate *under orders from, and in harmony with the divine forces* in the universe. In these difficult times, however, the 'good spirits' are just as hard at work in order to fill the souls receptive to good and lead them to God. Never are there so many great teachers, prophets and saints on the earth as at such troublous times.

But we would be making a great mistake if we were to look to these great minds, the masters of the Orient, for the solution of economic and political questions and for delivery from misery and war. People always get the kind of leader they deserve. It is the people themselves who follow someone else. *They* themselves select someone to be their leader, *they* make him great, *they* give him the power to be a leader. When they prefer, again and again, to follow an ignorant demagogue rather than an initiated master, how can some persons still believe that the great oriental teachers can save humanity from misery and ever-recurring wars? Some, perhaps, expect these masters to use force or magic to compel people to do the right thing.

Why does GOD do nothing to stop war and all the woe that people cause themselves through ignorance?—What, in this case, would become of man's free will? The great masters have no right to interfere with humanity's power of self-determination, and therefore they do not use their high spiritual powers to meddle with the fate of mankind, just as God does not interfere in the affairs of man. The great masters have no right to do people's work for them; for they would be depriving them of the opportunity to gather experiences, and the responsibility would be shifted from the shoulders of humanity to theirs. But how could people learn for themselves what is right and what is wrong—how could their eyes be opened so that, out of their own inner conviction, they do the right thing—if by means of compulsion or magic the right thing were done for them? That would be the same mistake that parents would make if they were to do all their children's homework for them. This merely would prevent the children from learning; they would remain ignorant; and when they encountered their first real problems in life, their ignorance would be woefully apparent.

Why do so many people expect to get the answers to their difficult human, economic and political problems from the great oriental masters? Why do not those who hold such hopes solve these problems themselves? If people do not want to follow good, and only very few are willing to listen to the words of the wise, the masters will never compel people to do good through force or magic—for that would be black magic.

They can and may show the way that leads to the solution, but the people themselves have to travel the path and APPLY THE SOLUTION IN PRACTICE in their everyday human affairs.

On the threshold of every new era, the masters proclaim the Word anew, awaken people's souls, and initiate people in the deepest secrets of human existence. At such times the initiated are freed of their vow of silence; they can speak out! We are now living in the midst of such a transition period, and the great masters of the Orient are sending their disciples out in all directions in order to make available to the whole world the great treasure that has been preserved through the centuries—the way to happiness. But whether people choose to follow this path in their daily living . . . depends only on themselves!

* * *

Ramakrishna was one of India's greatest saints.* He lived in the nineteenth century, and people flocked to him from all over the world. He was one of India's great masters who knew Christ from his own spiritual experience. He devoted two full years to studying only the Gospels and to recognizing Christ. He knew that the world is headed for an age of fulfilment, the era of Pisces, followed by that of Aquarius. He knew what difficult times would come over the earth. From among his disciples he chose the most gifted one and devoted years to preparing him for the great task of showing the occidental world the shortest path that leads to God: Yoga. Swami Vivekananda was this disciple, and he himself was a holy man who lived in God. His remarkable faculties were developed by Ramakrishna through systematic training. After a thorough grounding in the various Yogas and many years of studying the holy books, he had acquired the necessary spiritual powers and was sent forth to bring to the Occident the wisdom of the East.

Swami Vivekananda was the first teacher who went from the Orient to the West to proclaim openly the secret of mankind. Christ prophesied that the time would come when secrets would be made known from the housetops. In America and England Swami Vivekananda gave countless lectures, and his works on the various Yogas are source books of permanent value in Yoga literature.† His writings fairly breathe the breath of God, and they have spread to the far corners of the earth. People who thirst for the water of life read and study them.

Even before Swami Vivekananda set out on his journey, a remarkably gifted woman of the Occident, Madame H. P. Blavatsky, began to communicate to the western world the ancient wisdom of the East. According to her own story, Madame Blavatsky was the disciple of three great masters, an Indian, an Egyptian, and a Hungarian; and what she learned from them she wrote in two great books 'Isis Unveiled' and 'Secret Doctrine'. These books had a great influence everywhere, and the wisdom of the East began its march of conquest throughout the whole world.

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* See Romain Rolland: 'Prophets of the New India'.

† See 'Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda' published by Mayavati Memorial Edition.

Colleagues of Mme. Blavatsky also helped greatly to make accessible the treasures of the Orient. Franz Hartmann translated several sacred Indian books from Sanskrit into German, Annie Besant into English, and both of them wrote valuable works of their own. Space does not permit us to mention all those who have participated in spreading India's spiritual treasures. The fact is that a large number of India's holy books have now been translated into western languages and made accessible to all. The Mahabharata, whose most outstanding part is the Bhagavad Gita, the Ramayana Epic, the Puranas, the Yogi aphorisms of Patanjali, many of the Old Sutras, Sabhapatti Swami, Sankaracharya, Rabindranath Tagore, and Mukerji are now available in the West.

After patiently overcoming many difficulties, considerable numbers of people of the West have also been accepted as disciples by great Indian masters and, by following the path of Yoga, have attained the great goal. Some of them have recorded their experiences and published them in books. These works have opened new doors for souls in search of the way of truth. Among the best known of these authors is Avalon who, in his book 'The Serpent Power', revealed the profound secret of the human spine—the path of Kundalini power. Others include Evans Wentz in collaboration with the famous Tibetan Lama Dawa Sandup, Alexandra David Neel, Paul Brunton, Heinrich Zimmer, and other excellent authors who, through their many published works, have helped to make known to the western world the Orient's millenniums-old knowledge of faculties and possibilities slumbering within the human being. And these works become more numerous every day.

In the service of God the seed is sown, and the harvest of truth is reaped. Little by little, people in the Occident are getting acquainted with the treasure hidden within their SELF which they can discover by following, step by step, the path of Yoga. It may seem strange but it is nonetheless true that Indian philosophy has helped many people in the West to find their way back to their own religion—to Christ. They have only really understood the meaning of the Bible after a detour through oriental teachings. After they had become acquainted with the inner secrets of the soul through the Vedanta, Advaita-Vedanta, Upanishads and Yoga, they finally comprehended the great truth of the words of the Bible.

Many will ask, 'But isn't Yoga against the Christian religion?' How could it be? Yoga stands on psychological facts, on reality. How could reality be against truth—against the Christian religion, or any other? The nucleus of every religion is truth. How could truth upset a religion whose basis is truth? God is not a human concept, but *living reality*. The fact that this reality is called 'Brahma' by the Hindus, 'Allah' by the Mohammedans, 'Jehova' by the Jews, and 'God' by the Christians does not change the fact—the reality—in any way. How could reality upset reality? Knowledge, that is the expansion of the human field of view, leads us closer to God. Yoga is the path of human development and hence the path to God. Those who practise Yoga come closer to him every day. Yoga, therefore, is not against Christianity or against the essence of any other religion; on the contrary, Yoga helps us to understand and experience religion. Ramakrishna says: 'Through Yoga a Hindu becomes a better Hindu, a Christian a better Christian, a Mohammedan a better Mohammedan, and a Jew a better Jew!'

Yoga develops the mind, teaches us to control our emotions, lifts our attention from inferior things, and teaches us reverence, gentleness, and love of peace. Yoga develops the nervous system, makes the body healthy and well. A balanced mind fills the body with life-giving currents, and the healthy body has a salutory effect on the mind, filling it with joy and happiness.

Yoga develops the will power, and those who have a strong will resist temptations, resist sin, and are not swept away by physical passions and lust for power and possessions. A man with well developed will power has his instincts and desires under control.

Yoga expands the consciousness and the intellect. As the intellect develops, the power of discrimination grows. When man must decide between the two worlds, the mortal and the immortal—between the changing and the eternal—through Yoga he will know what he should choose. Yoga opens, little by little, man's spiritual eyes so that he can realize that the constantly changing, mortal, earthly world is not reality; that it is an illusion, a mirage, a world of effects back of which the FIRST CAUSE stands and works forever in all eternity. Blessed are those who choose the CAUSE instead of the effect. The person who lives on the plane of causation ceases to be driven about like a spineless puppet by the forces that touch him. He becomes master of his own life and fate. He constantly lives in the presence of the Spirit, in the ever-lasting PRESENCE OF GOD.

Yoga leads man into universal unity. Man's mind is filled with an all-inclusive, all-comprehending, all-forgiving universal love. Those initiated in Yoga love their neighbours truly as themselves because they feel themselves one with each and all. They do not need to fear that they will offend someone or sin against someone; they are the living reality of the principle of doing unto others as they would have others do unto them; for they feel others as they feel themselves. For them there are no 'personal pronouns' any more, because they feel that the SELF fills all with life—in you—in them—I am living—I AM!

Thus through Yoga man attains the sacred community. He passes from the personal, little, human SELF to the divine OVERSELF, to perfection; and merged into God, he experiences the unity that animates mankind. Only people who have reached perfection on the individual path can practise the sacred community based on brotherly love—the holy community which exists to manifest the divine plane with its heavenly harmony here on the earthly level. Thus the two paths, individual and collective, are welded together into one. Neither is complete in itself; each is the complement, the fulfilment of the other.

Collectivism can only be complete through the unity of individually developed people who radiate unselfish love. And for the individual, only a life established on the basis of such a collective group can give him the possibility to develop his faculties and be happy.

Collectivism always involves the tremendous danger of oppressing the individual and hindering the development of his talents and faculties. Great values can be lost in this way, with consequent damage to the community, because uniformly educated people, all brought up according to the same pattern, are a dangerous impediment to the struggle towards perfection of the whole of humanity. *The only remedy is, first of all, to avoid neglecting the individual within the collective group and, secondly, to develop and perfect people individually.*

In the Orient the Yoga path has been developed to perfection, but it can only be of value to mature people. The ignorant, wretched masses are disorganized and live in indescribable misery. It is in vain that India possesses the health-giving science of Hatha Yoga, when millions of her people go hungry, instead of being able to live by the rules of Yoga. Some persons in India achieve the ability to control at will all the functions of their bodies, and hence to control their health. But at the same time the masses, ignorant and neglected, live in misery. Only a collectivism established on brotherly love can help here. The people must be organized in a collective manner and trained to use their heritage of the individual path of Yoga.

Both Orient and Occident have the task of sharing, each with the other, the wisdom learned and the results attained. For the individual as well as all humanity the only way to happiness is when the two paths—the individual inner path and the outward collective path—meet and merge.

In the Occident we call love Christ; absence of love, Antichrist.

Collectivism is the kingdom of the Antichrist—hell—when love is lacking.

But it is the kingdom of heaven on earth—the kingdom of Christ—when it is founded on love.

Here some persons are prone to object that this latter condition is quite impossible—an unattainable dream, because people are all lacking in love. People? But how about us? Somebody has to start! Let *us* begin! Let's not wait until the other fellow begins. Let's not expect salvation from the outside. Let's not expect other people—even the great masters—to deliver us—but let us begin within ourselves. Let us respect our fellow human beings as much as we would parts of our own body. Just as our body has various members for performing different tasks, yet all are equally important, so shall we respect our fellow men of every rank and order and look upon them as brothers.

We must always give others credit for good intentions, and we must never be afraid of our fellow man. If we notice hostility, we must look deeper, and sure enough we will see that the other person is suffering from something that makes him irritable. He believes that he must defend himself. People are not bad—merely unhappy. *They do not know each other and are afraid of each other*. We must not be afraid of people; for fear causes negative radiations and makes others suspicious. Let us always remember that everyone is really only a poor, solitary wanderer on the narrow, rocky path, and that each and every one is carrying a heavy cross on his back. Let us always try to *see the cross the other fellow is carrying*, and not just feel that *our own* is a heavy burden. People envy each other because each sees in the life of others only the things that seem better than his own. But the heavy burdens and deep suffering in others' lives we do not see. *We do not notice these things because they do not hurt us personally, only the others*.

Let us not wait till fate, at the cost of great suffering, teaches us to understand other people's trials and tribulations! We must try to put ourselves in the place of the others we envy, and then we will realize that *they too have a heavy cross to bear*, *even if it is a different one from our own*.

Let us not blame other people, and let us not try to improve others! Let us begin the work within ourselves. If others are lacking in love, let *us* be all the more loving. If others wear a mask, let *us* be all the more careful not to wear one. If others are low in self-control, let *us* discipline ourselves even better than before.

Even if a life established in a perfect and holy community cannot be achieved from one day to the next, because people are not all on the same plane of development and cannot suddenly begin to transform hatefulness into brotherly love, if only a very small part of humanity travels the path of Yoga—radiating love and understanding—these few people can make life easier and more beautiful, not only for themselves, but for all the world. Those who are travelling the Yoga path can form a balance among opposing forces, islands of calm beyond the reach of waves of hate, where God-seeking souls find peace and strength. Let *us* be such islands. Let us practise Yoga with profound, unshakable faith: LET US EXPERIENCE GOD WITH ALL OUR HEART!

As Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita, the sacred book of the Indians:

> The LORD lives in the heart of every creature,
> O Arjuna,
> And with the power of imagination,
> With the power of Maya
> He causes them all to revolve
> As if on the potter's wheel.
> Have recourse to HIM alone.
> Through his mercy
> You will find majestic peace
> And being that is above all change.
> So have I taught you, O Arjuna, this wisdom
> That is the secret of secrets.
> Reflect profoundly upon it.
> Then act as you see fit.
> These are my last words to you,
> The profoundest of all truths.
> I speak for your own good,
> For you are my friend
> Whom I have chosen and love.

— OM —

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